

THE HISTORY of ANTICHRIST;
OR,
FREE THOUGHTS
ON THE
CORRUPTIONS of CHRISTIANITY.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO the AUTHOR of "The Reviewer Reviewed," and other late Publications.

By WILLIAM RICHARDS.

Didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it swes? --- An Enemy hath done this. Mat. xiii. 27. 28.

Ye have heard that ANTICHRIST shall come, even now are there many ANTICHRISTS, whereby we know that it is the last time.

1 John ii. 18.

The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith; giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. ---

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 6.

To his disciples

[He] shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd

And his salvation

Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die: but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure.

MILTON P. L. B. xii.

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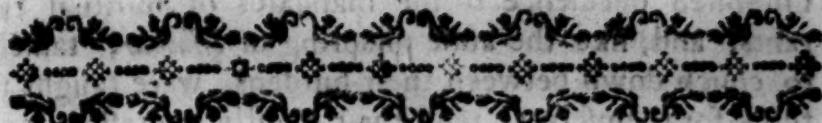
THE Author is very sensible of the unpopular nature of the doctrines maintained in these sheets. He therefore does not expect that this tract will procure him the applause or good-will of the devout world: But rather that it will induce them to stigmatize him with the opprobrious appellation of a BIGOT, or, perhaps, with something still more degrading. The charge of BIGOTRY, however, he absolutely denies, and insists that he has not a grain of that quality in his composition—unless it be understood to imply, a conscientious attachment to what one sincerely believes to be the doctrine of the Bible—or the OPPOSITE OF SCEPTICISM.

To bigotry, if he rightly understands that word, and to religious intolerance, with every thing inimical to freedom of inquiry and the right of private judgment, he is a professed and determined enemy. Nevertheless, he judges that he and all men have a right to REASON against any religious notions that appear to them to be FALSE, and to LAUGH at any that are ABSURD AND EXTRAVAGANT.—Consistently with these principles he thinks he has acted throughout the ensuing pages; which he now respectfully submits to the candid consideration of the free and serious inquirer after Truth, and devoutly recommends to the blessing of GOD.

C O R R I G E N D A.

Page 3. l. 4. after *faith* read *and*—Ib. l. 5. after *confidently*, *dele*—*and*—p. 20. last line, after *or*, *dele even*—p. 26. note, for *Colledge* *r.* *College*—p. 28. l. 1. for *beirarchies* *r.* *bierarchies*—p. 46. l. 20. for *add* *r.* *and*,—p. 55. l. 26. for *clearly* *r.* *clearly*—p. 59. last l. for *successors* *r.* *successors*—p. 66. note, after *Origen* *r.* if *Origen* be an exception.—p. 85. for *genuinaneſſ* *r.* *genuinenefs*—p. 92. l. 9. for *into* *r.* *unto*—p. 122. l. 11. for *where* *r.* *were*.

Month: *Reo*: Vol: LXXII, /o-396-8.



LETTER I.

SIR,

A Protestant engaged in the defence of *Infant Sprinkling* seems to me one of the most awkward figures in the world.—He professes the belief of the inspiration of the scriptures, and their sufficiency as a rule of faith & practice, and at the same time, confidently and ~~and~~ zealously asserts the divine origin of a religious rite which those inspired writings, as is allowed on all hands, *never once mention*. The folly and inconsistency of such a conduct have been often pointed out; and the popish champions can always on this ground attack their paedobaptist opponents with success. (A)

The *Reformation*, it must be allowed, was an event that gave a terrible blow to the kingdom of Antichrist. Like the confusion at Babel, it broke a most cursed confederacy. It proved exceedingly favourable to the rights of Mankind, and gave an opportunity to thousands of captives to assume their freedom. The fetters of bigotry and superstition were then in a great degree weakened:

weakened; and multitudes of those who used to yield unlimited obedience to the mandates of spiritual tyrants, and, like the asine offspring of *Issachar*, tamely to couch down between their burdens, were taught to think for themselves, resist their ghostly oppressors, and act as rational creatures. In short, that event set the subjects of Antichrist together by the ears; and raised such commotions in his dominions as he will never be able to quell. His house has been, ever since, *a house divided against itself*: And from that period one may venture to date the beginning of its decay, which, in time, will inevitably issue in its downfall. But the reformation was not the restoration of primitive or genuine Christianity: Nor did it introduce a *more consistent* system than that of *Rome*. Whatever advantage the reformed religion may pretend to over the popish, it surely *cannot be that of consistency*.

Zuinglius, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer and their associates, are however rightly enough called *reformers*: and their work is very justly termed a *reformation*; for it was, in fact, nothing more than mending, or, improving the old superstition. Had they introduced the system of the New Testament, their work, properly speaking, would *not* have been a reformation, but *a total change*; since that system and popery are two very different things.—No two things in the world can be more so. The reformers may be said to have produced a new edition of popery, with additions and amendments—Varied, indeed, in some respects, to suit the particular circumstances and tempers of different nations. The religious hierarchies produced by the reformation, and established in different countries, retain the very spirit, and are form'd according to the very pattern of the Roman hierarchy. And how should they be otherwise, consistent with the idea of a *reform*?—For that clearly

reformation implies

implies that they still partake of the *nature*, and bear the *image* of popery, their common parent. In truth they all manifestly militate against that remarkable Testimony of the glorious Prince of Martyrs, “My kingdom is not of this World.” Intolerance and oppression have marked the progress of all these worldly Systems.—Their ecclesiastical Annals, not excepting those of the Independents of New England, will easily prove this.

The revival of letters must be dated rather earlier than the reformation; and that event appears to have been in no small degree favourable to this. It must be confessed, however, on the other hand, that the reformation *eventually* facilitated the advancement of literature, and the introduction of civil and religious liberty. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that the reformers ever admitted these important objects into their plan. Like their opponents the papists, they always proceeded with an air of infallibility and supremacy. The weapons of their warfare were the carnal ones of imposition, imprisonment, banishment and death. Their hierarchies were, consequently, established in oppression and blood. Here papists and reformers agreed, and went on hand in hand. An honest man who observes both parties, in this point of view, will be apt, perhaps, to recollect those words of Jacob and apply them.—“Simeon and Levi are bre-
thren: instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.” “O my soul, come not thou into their secret:” “unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!” * The pleasure I feel in looking back to the days of the reformation does not proceed from any admiration either of the systems, or yet of the general conduct of the reformers; but rather from a view of

the many important blessings that ensued, which they neither expected nor wished for. "The Ecclesiasticks of particular countries," says a learned modern writer, "did indeed at that time emancipate themselves from their subordination to the see of Rome; but they all established hierarchies of their own, according to their several systems; and paid no more regard to the natural rights of conscience, and the promotion of true religious liberty than the church of Rome itself —the people only changed their masters." * But the advantages that did result from this astonishing revolution

(c) • Evanson's letter to the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, p. 61. 62. Should any be disposed to dispute the above representation of the conduct and character of the reformers, I would beg leave to remind them of the persecution in Switzerland under the direction of *Zwinglius*, wherein much innocent blood was spilt.—That in *Germany*, particularly against *Carolstad* and *Schwenckfeldt* under the influence of *Luther* and his friends. --- That at *Geneva*, raised by *Calvin*, wherein *Servetus* was murdered---and that in *England* wherein *George Van Pare* and *Joan Bocher* suffered, under the influence of *Cranmer* and *Ridley*.

A Multitude of instances might be easily produced in proof of the intolerant and bloody disposition of the reformers.—Not excepting the moderate and gentle *Bucer*, and the modest and meek *Melancthon*, as they have been called. The former did not scruple to declare in the pulpit, That *Michael Servetus*, for his heresies, deserved to have his entrails pulled out, and to be torn in pieces. The latter approved of the burning of *Servetus*; and wrote to the *popish* senate of *Venice* to excite them to persecute certain of the subjects of that republic, who, it seems, had presumed to claim a right to the exercise of private judgment, and held some sentiments repugnant to those of *Melancthon*. Akin to this last was *Calvin's* courtesy, if I may so call it, to the *popish* Magistrates of *Vienne* in *Dauphiné*, on a certain very memorable occasion. They both remind one, of the well known reconciliation of *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, and their concurrence with the *Jews* in persecuting the Son of God. See *Priestley's* Hist. of the Corruptions of Christianity vol. 2 part ix. Section 5. *Taylor's* farther thoughts on the grand Apostacy p. 75 &c. Life of *Servetus*,---Lond. 1724. *Formey's* Eccl. Hist vol. 2. p. 325. *Mosheim* vol. 3. p. 327. note (t) and vol. 4 p. 29 30. 31. And for the character of the New Englanders above mentioned, see *Mather's* Eccl. Hist. And particularly the books published in the controversy between *Messrs. Cotton* and *Roger Williams*.

revolution are many and invaluable: And the very same thing may be said of the scruple of Harry the 8th. about his marriage with his brother's widow.

— In that view, both those circumstances will be remembred with pleasure and admiration by the latest posterity.

The glaring disparity between the systems of the reformers, and that of the New Testament, obliges me to consider them all as *antichristian*. Had they belonged to Christ, they would certainly bear the image of Christ; that is, in other words, they would have been formed according to the Gospel model. Nothing short of an agreement with the New Testament can give any man, or set of men a right to bear the name of Christ. Those who assume his name but reject his laws and institutions, are not his followers but those of *Antichrist*. Christianity is doubtless a *personal concern*. Profane persons and infants are not entitled to the name of Christians any more than professed infidels.— That name, according to the New Testament, belongs only to those who believe the Gospel, or, at least, profess that they do so, and who outwardly observe its precepts. The *disciples* of Christ, or those who *learnt his doctrines* were the people *first called Christians* in Scripture: Nor does it appear that the appellation was ever afterwards, in the Apostolic age, given to any else. — Neither Church-membership nor the Christian name was then thought to belong to any who could give no satisfactory evidence of their faith in Christ. Those Churches, therefore, that comprehend new-born infants, and loose persons of various descriptions, among their members, or which consist of whole nations, are not agreeable to the New Testament, but are corrupt and *antichristian* churches.

Most of the corruptions of Christianity, if not all, seem to have proceeded from a disbelief of the memorable confession of Jesus before Pilate, and a disposition to accommodate the Gospel to the fashion and relish of the world. If we trace the grand Apostacy from its origin in the defection of the Judaizing Teachers, down through all its subsequent appearances among the Ebionites, Gnostics, Marcionites and all their corrupt contemporaries and successors, a dislike to the New Testament plan, and a disposition to make Christianity more agreeable to the prejudices and common principles of unbelievers, will be always discoverable. The introduction of the Oriental Philosophy, the formation of what was called the New Platonism, and its incorporation with Christianity, must, doubtless, be ascribed to these causes. Here also we must look for the parentage of National Churches. And it is equally certain that infant sprinkling itself is of the very same lineage.

The first Protestants, in allowing the divine authority of infant baptism are chargeable with the folly of countenancing a practice incompatible with, and subversive of their own leading principles. The Scripture's Sufficiency as a rule of faith and practice, was the ground upon which they opposed Popery: but the Scripture, as all the impartial world knows and declares, contains no express or particular precept for baptizing infants: it must follow, therefore upon the supposition that such a practice is really founded in the New Testament, that that book instead of being more clear, is on the contrary far more obscure than the Old Testament; since all the positive duties of the latter rest upon clear unequivocal declarations, or in other words, plain and express precepts. Hence the Jews were never under the necessity of having recourse for direction in the performance

performance of the *positive* duties of their law, to the *inadequate and foreign* rules of consequence, inference, induction and analogy.—*That drudgery*, according to your argument, Sir, was reserved for those who live under the *Goipel* dispensation.

The rejection of infant sprinkling seems to me absolutely necessary in order to rescue the New Testament from the above degrading imputation. And it is, certainly, as safe and honourable in a Protestant as it is necessary, since he, thereby, acts in perfect *consistency with the truth and with himself*. Indeed, were I a *different* paedobaptist, I think, I should scarce ever venture to dispute with a papist, a deist, or a church of England-man; especially if I had reason to think that such an opponent had ever adverted to the hostile aspect my paedobaptist notions had towards my other principles: for in that case I should expect in every attack to be repulsed with a—“Physician heal thyself!”

“ — Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy
 “ brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is
 “ in thine own eye! — How wilt thou say to thy bro-
 “ ther let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and
 “ behold a beam is in thine own eye! — Thou
 “ hypocrite! First cast the beam out of thine own
 “ eye! * — Or — Let us now turn the tables,
 “ and take a short view of your religious persuasion
 “ in its reverse, and merely as it stands upon its own
 “ bottom; let us contemplate for a moment the *œco-*
 “ *nomy* of your faith in no other light than what our
 “ understanding will afford us for the prospect, and
 “ see what a venerable figure it will make under
 “ such a representation, and considered only in the
 “ eye of strict and unassisted reason. To take it as
 “ it naturally occurs in its first step; for instance,
 “ of *baptism*: — Can any thing be more natural
 “ upon

“ upon hearing of a *rational* *faith*, than to interrogate with the greatest simplicity ; — *Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot possibly pretend to know any thing about the matter?* — To represent this whole proceeding justly, and according to the laws of reason would be to give a very injurious image of that heavenly mystery &c. &c.” *

That species of Christianity, if I may call it so, which comprehends infant sprinkling, is made up of materials exceedingly similar to those that composed the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzars image †: hence its votaries are ever exposed to the ridicule and contempt of their opponents. Their *kingdom* like that mentioned by the prophet, is actually *divided* — It is *partly strong and partly brittle*. — The utmost efforts of human skill and ingenuity cannot make to cleave to one another, such heterogeneous materials as Iron and Clay, or as infant sprinkling and the doctrines of the Gospel.

This, Sir, is a serious subject; I must, therefore beg leave to dwell a little longer upon it by way of illustration. — “ Infant baptism, says a late learned writer, § “ is a pillar of Popery ; what serves greatly to support it, and which furnishes the *Papists* with one of the strongest arguments against the *Protestants* in favour of their traditions, on which the essentials of Popery are founded ; and of the *authority of the church* to alter the rites of divine worship. They sadly *embarrass* *pædobaptist protestants* with the affair of *infant Sprinkling*, and urge them either to prove it by scripture both with respect to mode and subjects, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church, or give it up. And if they can allow of unwritten traditions ;

* Christianity not founded on argument p. 69.

† Dan. 2.

§ Dr. Gill, — Infant baptism, part and pillar of Popery, p. 16.

traditions, and the custom of the church, as of authority in one point, why not in others? This way of arguing, as Mr. Stennett observes, is used by *Cardinal Du Perron* in his reply to the answer of King *James the first*; and by Mr. *John Ainsworth* against Mr. *Henry Ainsworth*, in the dispute between them; and by *Fisher the jesuit*, against *Archbishop Laud*. An instance of the same kind, he adds, we have in the controversy between *Monsieur Boffuet, bishop of Meaux* and a learned anonymous writer said to be *Monsieur De la Roque*, pastor of the reformed Church at *Roan in Normandy*. The Bishop in order to defend the with-holding the cup in the Lord's Supper from the laity, urged that infant sprinkling both as to mode and subjects is unscriptural, and solely by the authority of tradition and custom; with which the pretended reformed [nevertheless] complied; and therefore, why not in the former case? — Which produced this ingenuous confession from his antagonist. — That *to baptize by sprinkling was certainly an abuse derived from the Romish Church* † without due examination, as well as many other things, which he and his brethren where resolved to correct, and he thanked the bishop for undeceiving them. — And as to the baptism of infants he freely confessed there is *nothing formal or express in the Gospel to justify the necessity of it*, and that the passages produced, do at most only prove that it is permitted, or rather that it is not forbidden to baptize them. * —

B

Such

† Dr. Wall also, to whose judgment Mr. C. sometimes pays no small deference, seems to view this matter much in the same light: —— Indeed I think it must be very plain that he considers the *Pope's Authority* as the *source* from whence infant *sprinkling* originated. —— See Hist. Inf. Bapt. vol. 2. p. 376. Ed. 1720.

* See Gill's Infant baptism part and pillar of popery, as before: and for a farther account of the above controversy, See Stennett's answer to *Rusen*, p. 173. —— 189.

Such, Sir, was the dilemma to which this learned and able protestant was reduced by the acute and wily *Bossuet* in that remarkable dispute. Nor is it possible for a paedobaptist to avoid being handled in a like manner whenever he is opposed on this ground by an antagonist of equal abilities with that celebrated champion of the papacy. The popish attacks on this quarter have been so invariably attended with success, that any one may venture to pronounce *infant sprinkling*, THE SHIELD AND SWORD OF ROME; and the DISGRACE AND CURSE OF PROTESTANTISM. The Romanists, Sir, very well know that the denial of infant sprinkling deprives them of their principal rational weapon against the protestants: Hence whenever they meet with Antipaedobaptists, if they dare not use such favourite weapons as the *Sword* and the *faggot* they don't care to dispute with them at all. The aforesaid bishop of Meaux, than whom that party, perhaps, never possessed an abler advocate, affirms that experience hath shewn that all the attempts of the reformed to confute the Antipaedobaptists from scripture, have been weak and vain; 'And, therefore,' says he, 'they are obliged to alledge to them the *practice of the Church*.' A little after he says that when the reformed believe that they have the word of God very expressly on their side, they are not wont to build on the perpetual practice of the Church; but in this case, (i. e. that of infant sprinkling) because the scripture furnishes them with nothing by which they are able to stop the mouths of the Anabaptists it is necessary to rely on somewhat else, and at the same time to confess that, in *these matters*, the perpetual *practice of the church* is of inviolable authority.' In another place, after observing that the reformed, in his

his time, had given up the *necessity* of baptism to salvation, and rested it upon the notion that the children of believers are born in the covenant, according to this promise—I will be thy God and the God of thy offspring &c concluding therefrom that since the *virtue* and *substance* of baptism, belong to those infants, it would be injurious to deny them the *sign* which is inferior. — He adds, “ by a like reason they will find themselves forced to give them the communion together with baptism; for they who are in the covenant are incorporated with Jesus Christ; the infants of believers are in covenant, therefore they are incorporated with Jesus Christ. And having by this means, according to them, the virtue and substance of the communion, they ought to say as they do of baptism, that the *sign* of it *cannot without injury be refused them.* ” “ The anabaptists,” he adds, “ maintain that those words, *let a man examine himself and so let him eat,* have *not* more force to require the age of discretion in them who partake of the *holy supper,* than those other words, *he that believeth and is baptized,* have to require it in those who are admitted to baptism*.” — All this, Sir, clearly shews in what

* Stennett, as before. — This remark deserves the very serious consideration of the generality of Pædobaptists; whose reasonings on this head are most ridiculously inconsistent. — If you ask them the reason, why they do not give *infants* the *Lord's Supper*, they will answer, — because they cannot *discern the Lord's body*, and *examine themselves*, which the subjects of that ordinance are required to do. — If you tell them in reply, that neither can they give satisfactory evidence of their *belief* of the gospel, which is also as expressly required in the subjects of baptism. — They will then tell you, with great gravity, that the passages that require *faith prior to baptism* refer only to *adults.* — Should you then urge that the same may be alleged, with equal truth, of the passages that require discerning the *Lords body* and *self examination prior to the partaking of the Lord's Supper*, they will pretend, with a very confidential air, that the cases are *not parallel*, and presently will *sneak off* for

light the bishop considered the attempt to vindicate infant sprinkling from the scripture.—He very plainly intimates that the sacred writings are here almost entirely useless; and that we are to look quite another way for the origin and authority of this practice, and consequently for the means of supporting it.—In short, it seems to be his firm opinion that the people he calls anabaptists *cannot be confuted by the word of God*; and even that the very attempt, *in a paedobaptist protestant*, to confute them by that, or indeed by any other means, must be preposterous in the extreme.

This *argumentum ad hominem*, which *Bossuet* and his forementioned brethren had recourse to, is irresistible.—A *paedobaptist protestant* cannot stand in this war. But a baptist—a *consistent protestant* can always meet those inveterate foes of protestantism and unadulterated christianity, the papists, without danger or dread.—Their most formidable rational weapons cannot hurt him.—The following anecdote will give you a tolerable view of his advantageous and happy situation.

In the days of king Charles the second lived *Mr. Jeremiah Ives*, an eminent *baptist minister*, particularly noted for his great polemical abilities. The king be-

ing

for shelter under the cover of some *quibble* or other, which they have taken care to provide themselves with, to serve as a kind of *asylum*, in case their opponents think proper to come to close argument.—Some *Paedobaptists*, indeed, among whom are found the respectable names of *Mr. Peirce* of Exeter and *Dr. Priestley*, have entertained very different, and far more generous and consistent sentiments on this subject; for they are as warm advocates for infant communion as for infant baptism.

—See *Peirce's* *Essay* on the ancient practice of giving the *Eucharist* to *Children*.—*Priestley's* *Address* to protestant dissenters on the subject of giving the *Lord's Supper* to *Children*; and *History of the corruptions of Christianity* vol. 2. p.65. —A farther account of this hypothesis shall be given in another place.

at my Pamph: Vol: XXXIII,

ing acquainted with his character, sent for him to dispute with a *popish priest*. Mr. Ives appeared in the habit of a clergyman; and the dispute was carried on before the king and many others. In the course of the debate, his opponent pressed the priest very closely; shewing that whatever antiquity they pretended to, the doctrine and practices of his church could by no means be proved apostolic, since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest after much wrangling, *at last* replied, *that this argument was of as much force against infant baptism as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the church of Rome*. Mr. Ives readily granted that it was so. This concession gave the priest an opportunity to know his man; and he immediately broke up the dispute, declaring that he had been cheated, and would proceed no further; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established church, and it was then evident that his antagonist was an anabaptist preacher *

The priest thought, Sir, that there was a vast difference, especially in the field of the popish controversy, between a clergyman of the church of England and what he called an anabaptist preacher.—And it appears that he thought the latter really an invulnerable foe; for nothing it seems could perswade him to look Mr. Ives in the face, after he had once discovered who he was.—He did not fear him while he took him for a *church of England parson*; nor would he, I dare say, have shrunk from the combat had he found him to be an *independent minister*; for in either case he could easily have secured himself from the disgrace of a defeat by the help of his opponent's paedobaptist principles: and he seems to have known well how to

make

* See Crosby's Hist. of Engl. Bapt. vol. 4. p. 247.

make a right use of every advantage he might derive from that quarter, and to have been able to advance as good reasons for all the usages of the romish church as any paedobaptist could advance for infant sprinkling. Moreover, it is perfectly clear that he considered his antagonist's holding infant sprinkling as his own *dernier resort*; for when Mr. Ives gave up that point, he had not one word more to say to him.

And as protestant paedobaptists in general, are urged by this plea to admit the unwritten traditions of the papists, so the *dissenting paedobaptists* in particular, are pressed upon the same footing by those of the *church of England* to comply with the ceremonies of that church retained from the church of Rome †. An instance of this we have in *Dr. Whitby*; ‡ who having pleaded for some condescension to be made to dissenters in order to reconcile them to the church, says, “ and on the other hand, if notwithstanding the evidence produced that baptism by *immersion* is suitable both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our *burial* with Christ, and so our dying to sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life; as the apostle doth clearly maintain the meaning of that rite: I say, if notwithstanding this, all our dissenters * do agree to sprinkle the baptized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our church? for, since it is as lawful to add unto Christ's institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony which he or his apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? and

† See *Infant baptism part and pillar of Popery.* p. 19.

‡ *Protestant Reconciler.* p. 289.

* i. e. all who retain infant sprinkling.

and why should not the *peace and union of the church* be as prevailing with them to perform the one, as is their *mercy* to the *infant's body* to neglect the other?"

— 'Thus infant baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the church of *Rome* and of the church of *England*.' — It answers the self same end to both those communities, and operates as strongly and effectually in favour of the latter as of the former. A sensible *church man* who is thoroughly acquainted with its use, has no need to fear the face of the shrewdest *dissenting paedobaptist* in the world; since he may easily furnish himself with as cogent reasons in favour of all the superstitious rites of his church, as the other can possibly advance in favour of this ceremony — The truth is — infant sprinkling is the genuine offspring of a principle subversive of New Testament christianity: and therefore it is no wonder that the perverters of divine truth, and supporters of worldly establishments are excessively fond of it. — It always stands them in great stead; for it tends to frustrate one of the grand designs of the gospel — The establishing a kingdom *not of this world*: i. e. not formed upon a worldly model, nor governed by worldly maxims; but formed upon a model, and governed by maxims altogether supernatural and divine: which renders it, indeed, a very singular sort of a community — Separate from the world, and incapable of an alliance with the state. Nothing can be plainer than that the rite in question aims at a compromise between christianity and worldly systems, and converting the former into a kingdom — to all intents and purposes, OF THIS WORLD.

Another of the innumerable curses attendant upon, and produced by infant sprinkling is, that it gives oc-

causon

caſion to those enemies of Jesus Christ, the *Deiſts*, to despise his Word, and reproach his Name. The ſu-
 /a/ ceſſful attack made by the subtle and ironical author of *Christianity not founded on argument*, by the help of this absurd usage, is fresh in every body's memory. That ſly and keen ſon of infidelity ſpread a general alarm through all the tents of paedobaptism †. The

whole

† He inferred from the manifest irrationality of infant baptism as it appears in the eſtablished church, and upon a ſuppoſition that it is founded in the New Testament, that christianity muſt be an irrational religion.---See *Christianity not founded on argument* 3d. Ed. p. 9. and 69. In anſwer to this Dr. Doddridge ſays (3d. letter p. 55) 'If there be any form of baptism in the christian world which juſtifies ſuch inferences, and ſuch a manner of ſpeaking, I am extremely ſorry for it. But I am very confident the scripture teaches nothing of this kind; and it is by that, and not by the rubrick of any particular church whether popiſh or protestant, that the merits of this cauſe are to be tried.' And Dr. Benson urges that 'the objection was founded on a miſtaken notion of baptism,' and that the author knew very well that ſome christians denied infant baptism, and that he had much better have done ſo than have given up his understanding and rational christianity all at once.' (ſee Benson's reaſonableness of the christian religion p. 95. 96.) Dr. Leland on the ſame ſide affirms that the ſtrength of his opponents argument here 'depends upon the ſneering account he gives of the nature of baptism. But there needs no more,' ſays he, 'to ſhow the weakneſs and fallacy of it, than to ſtate the caſe of baptism according to the *Gospel notion of it*; in which alone christianity is concerned.' Mark his account of the *gospel notion of baptism*, which immediately follows.--- 'At the first founding of the christian church, the first work was to bring persons over to the faith of the gospel, by ſetting before them the evidence whereby it was confirmed; and then, when they were once converted to the faith, they were, according to the divine appointment, to be baptized, which was a ſolemn taking upon them a profession of the christian religion, and a bringing themſelves under the moſt ſacred obligations to obey its laws. And there is nothing in this but what is perfectly conſiſtent with faith's being founded upon good and rational evidence; nor can ſo much as the ſhadow of an argument be brought from it to prove, that because persons were ordered to be *baptized after they believed*, therefore, they did not, nor could not, uſe their reaſon or intellectual faculty to lead them into that belief.'----He afterwards ſays.----'Our author is ſenſible of this, and therefore he *lays the ſtreſs of his argument upon the baptism of infants*, which he repreſents in his own way.' He then adds, 'let us therefore argue with him upon the

SUPPOſITION.

(a) Doddridge,

whole party appeared in the greatest consternation.— Churchmen and dissenters joined their forces with the utmost alacrity, and went forth, with all the ardency that

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SUPPOSITION, that it is the will of God, that not only adult persons, who themselves embraced the christian faith, but *that their children too should be baptized.*’ ---- The whole of the Doctor’s reasoning on this head, in his *two letters*, appears to me *very unfair*; and more so still is his reply to this argument in his *View of the deistical writers.* (vol. I. p. 226. Ed. 1754.) ---- ‘ You ask,’ says the author of the *Cambridge letter* to this deist. ---- “ Can a man be baptized into a rational religion ? ” ---- ‘ By commenting on the form of baptism in our Church, you endeavour to establish the negative; which you conclude with’ ---- “ Yet such is the pleasure and ordinance of God himself in this point.” ---- ‘ All this,’ adds our cantabrigian, ‘ is said as if the whole of your account was expressly revealed in the New Testament.’ And then he subjoins (oddly enough, indeed, as a son of the hierarchy) ---- ‘ The forms and modes of worship, the manner of administering the sacraments, and definitions and decrees relating to doctrines, as far as they are human appointments do not belong to our consideration.’ No less strange are his words a few pages after---- ‘ All our present concern is with pure and simple christianity; and not to account for difficulties added by religious establishments.’ ---- The words of the *Oxford replier* are perhaps still more remarkable ---- ‘ You lay it down peremptorily,’ says this writer to his antagonist, ‘ that it is the pleasure and ordinance of God that infants should be baptized;----because, I suppose, it best suited your purpose. For you know very well, that all christians are not of a mind in this matter; and it shews you are hard put to it for arguments against christianity, to lay hold of a DISPUTED PRACTICE, and build upon it as a plain express law of Christ.’ And he adds---- ‘ I do not remember any passage in the New Testament, which says expressly, that infants should be baptized; and as I am informed by better judges, the evidences for this practice from antiquity, tho’ very early, do not fully come up to the times of the apostles.’

For a full view of the above controversy, see the deistical tract above named, and the replies just mentioned, together with those of Mr. Mole and Dr. Randolph---the former entitled, *The grounds of the christian faith rational*; and the latter, *The christians faith a rational assent.* ---- For a view of it as far as it relates to baptism, see *Remarks on the several answers to christianity not founded on argument* by the late Grantham Killingworth Esq; --- Leland’s account in his *View of the deistical writers* is very imperfect.

that the apprehension of imminent danger inspires, to repel, and if possible to crush the daring assailant. Never did a set of christian champions make a droller appearance. They all, like you, Sir, pretended to be mighty advocates for *the scripture's sufficiency*; but they, in effect, gave up the scriptural authority of infant sprinkling, and yet, for all that, as I understand, acted in strict contormity to it as long as they lived. Most of them pretended to find great fault with their infidel antagonist, for taking his notion of baptism from the *rubrick of the established church*, and not from the New Testament. This the *dissenting* champions insisted very much upon; and they urged, that as infant sprinkling is different among them from what it is in the establishment, their opponent's reasoning did not at all affect their party. But this was a very unfair method to evade the force of the deist's argument, since it is very evident that by a little alteration in the form of it, he might easily have made it to militate as strongly against the paedobaptist dissenters as against the members of the hierarchy. But as you, Sir, observed in a certain place, 'it ought not to be wondered at if men at a dead lift should call any where for help.'

Before I conclude this letter you will give me leave to observe, that infant sprinkling is, in my opinion, the most advantageous ground upon which the deists can possibly oppose the gospel in vogue, or your improved and fashionable christianity; and withal, That it is indeed a doubt with me *whether there be*, really, in the whole pestilential group of antichristian institutions, by which the son of perdition maintains his influence in the world, *any one thing so subservient to the interest of that hateful potentate, so extensive in its mischief, or, even so repugnant,*

*repugnant, in every point of view to the design and spirit
of the New Testament, as infant sprinkling.*

I am, SIR, with great consideration and good will,

Your obliged humble Servant,

W. R.

LETTER II.

SIR,

EVER since you assumed the character of a controversial writer I have made a point of paying very particular attention to your writings: And I can assure you that I have hitherto seen no cause to be dissatisfied with that part of my conduct. A high regard for the interest of primitive christianity was my chief inducement to oppose you; and I have some reason to believe

believe that my efforts have been already in some measure subservient to that interest: which I consider as an ample compensation for all the ill will I incurred, and every inconvenience I suffered by following you through all the thick *dust* which you have so dexterously raised, and which has hitherto marked the whole of your polemical career.

It was from nothing short of a full conviction of your being at variance with the truth that I determined to animadvert on your *first* pamphlet. — I found myself exactly in the same predicament when I had perused your *second* piece; and therefore resolved *again* to animadvert. — Nor has a most cool and careful perusal of your *third* publication in the least altered the case: — Infant sprinkling still appears to be what I always thought it was — A most pernicious anti-christian abomination.

The more I read and compare with the New Testament your writings and others on the same side, the more I am confirmed in the opinion that this practice does not proceed from the belief of the gospel, but is the genuine offspring of another system, which has been formed in direct opposition to it.

Such really, Sir, is at present my most serious opinion of this matter, and such, in all probability, it will continue; for it is the result of a very careful and strict examination of the inspired records, which are the only authentic and sufficient materials towards forming a right judgment of whatever is denominated a religious duty. — But in order to state more fully and circumstantially my ideas of infant sprinkling, and trace that idle ceremony to its proper source, I must beg leave in the first place, to lay before you A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST:

I doubt not but you will readily allow that the New Testament makes frequent mention of a certain power or interest that should spring up in opposition to christianity, though under the pretence of pure love to it, and of profound veneration for its blessed Founder. *—Our Lord tells his disciples (Math. 24. 24.) ‘ There shall arise false christs and false prophets, who shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect.’ Another time he most earnestly cautions them (chap. 7. 15.) to beware of false prophets, ‘ who come to you,’ says he, ‘ in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.’ To the same purpose *Peter* says to his brethren (2 Ep. 2. 1. 2.) ‘ There shall be false teachers amongst you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies—Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.’ *Jude* also has in view the same object when he says, ‘ there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation—ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto laciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ &c.—These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage—But, beloved, remember the words which

were

* The divine authority of christianity has been often objected to, on account of the vast diversity of opinion among its professors, and the multitude of sects and parties which that has occasioned: but really when the matter is duly considered this objection can be of no force at all --Nay the very circumstance upon which it is founded evidently confirms what it is designed to destroy, since it is plainly *foretold* in the sacred writings.—It is certainly a confirmation of the divine authority of the New Testament that its prophets *foretell* the diversity of opinion, divisions and corruptions that should be found among the future professors of Christianity.

were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts, &c.'

But of all the New Testament writers, *Paul* and *John* speak the most upon this subject.—The former considers it frequently, and in various points of view: —He delineates the *mystery of iniquity* from its origin and first operations, till the *man of sin* exalted himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped: Nay even till the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming. This apostle describes the promoters and chiefs of this cursed party as *grievous wolves*, —*Men speaking perverse things*, to draw away disciples after them.—*False apostles*—*deceitful workers*, *transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*—*Ministers of Satan, transformed as the ministers of righteousness*; having Satan himself at their head; not indeed in his own proper shape and character, but—*transformed into an angel of light*.*

A still larger, and far more particular account of this matter is given in the writings of the apostle *John*: —He alone describes the *man of sin* and *son of perdition* under the name of *Antichrist*: —And he points him

* See *Acts* 20. 29. 30. *2 Cor.* 11. 13. 14. *Gal.* 2. 4. *2 Thess.* 2. 3. &c. *1 Tim.* 4. 1. &c. *2 Tim.* 3. 1. &c.

† *1 Ep. ii. 18. 22. iv. 3. and 2 Ep. 7.* The etymology of the word *antichrist* makes it capable of two different meanings: For it may either signify, *one who assumes the place and office of Christ*, or, *one who maintains*

him out in the persons of the false prophets of his time, and their followers; who denied the Father and the Son — denied that Jesus is Christ; — confessed not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; and withdrew from the fellowship of those who adhered to the truth. — In a word, he represents *Antichrist* as a person, party, or power actuated with a spirit opposite to that of Christ.

The terms *antichrist*, and the *spirit of antichrist*, used by this apostle, seem to me evidently designed to convey *two* distinct ideas. Some writers by confounding these terms, or taking them to be synonymous, have, I think, handled this subject very inaccurately. This seems particularly applicable to the following definition, which perhaps would not have been very exceptionable had the author adverted to the above distinction, and satisfied himself with defining the *spirit of antichrist* instead of the other term. His words are — ‘Flesh and blood is not antichrist, but a spirit contrary to Christ’s spirit, that dwells in flesh and blood, and chiefly among those that profess the christian religion — No spirit in the Jews or Gentiles is properly called antichrist, but the spirit of satan in false christians, appearing as an angel of light; this is antichrist. Before Christ came in the flesh the devil was an evil spirit and

maintains a direct enmity and opposition to him: — *Αντιχριστός* — *avth*, in the sense either of *pro* or *contra*. The latter is generally supposed to be the sense in which the apostle uses this term. I think, however, that it may be applied in *both* these senses to the power under consideration agreeably to the general tenor of the scripture account of it: For by that account it appears to be a power assuming the place of Christ and christianity, and also maintaining a direct opposition to them. To justify this last sense it is not necessary that the antichristian party should formally reject Christ, which it is certain it does not, but that it should act in defiance to the true genius of his doctrine. See Hurd on the Prop. vol. 2. p. 10. Ed. 1776.

and a liar, and a murderer, and the unclean spirit and prince of this world; but he was not properly antichrist, because Christ was not then come in the flesh. The devil was the devil before, and did dwell and work in evil men; but from the beginning of the christian Church he is called antichrist, and that not every where, but in the Church or Kingdom of Christ: For antichrist is a spirit that dissolves Jesus, and that not openly but subtilly and cunningly; yea under the name and pretence of Jesus, he is wholly contrary to him. * — That the devil presides over the anti-christian power as well as over all the other powers of darkness is very certain; and also that he assumes the name of Christ, and the appearance of an angel of light, as he stands connected with that power; but that the apostle applies the term antichrist to him, or calls him by that name, does not at all appear. On the other hand, it is I think very plain that he gives that name to a certain sort of *men* — Those *false prophets*, or corrupt teachers, who appeared at the head, or were the principal promoters of the interest in question. Each of these persons, according to his account, is *an antichrist*; — hence he saith with reference to them — ‘Even now are there many *antichrists*.’ † And a man who *confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* he calls *a deceiver and an antichrist*. § But he evidently uses the term in a far larger sense, even inclusive of the whole aggregate body

* See a tract called *The Tryal of spirits*, by W. Dell A. M. formerly Master of Caius Colledge, Cambridge---and afterwards a baptist Minister. p. 5. Ed. 1739.

† 1 John 2. 18.

§ 2 John 7.

body of that party, when, mentioning the tradition or prophecy relating to its rise, he says, ‘Ye have heard that *Antichrist shall come.**’ I can by no means think it very probable that these last words, as is generally supposed, have any direct or particular reference to the principal and most conspicuous head of this power on earth—the Pope. He doubtless is an antichrist: Though, as I apprehend, not particularly or singly pointed out as such, in this passage. It is plain that the apostle has here in view the prediction which apprized the primitive church of the speedy appearance of a formidable adverse power, distinguished from all the other enemies of Christ, by a profession of esteem for his name, and a total perversion of his gospel: This he calls *Antichrist*; and the term in this place obviously comprehends the whole party.

The doctrine of antichrist has been as often misrepresented, as perhaps any one doctrine in the divine revelation.—The generality of writers on this subject, seem by no means to have adverted with sufficient care and impartiality to the words of the inspired penmen concerning it. They seem to have been much too far influenced by their own particular interests or grievances in treating on this topic. The *Papists* pretend that antichrist is to be found only among the *Tyrants of pagan Rome*; while the *reformers* and others, who severely felt the vengeance of popish oppression, zealously assert that the romish church is the antichristian party, and the *Pope* the *Antichrist* of the scripture. Others again, groaning under the intolerable pressure of ecclesiastical despotism, as exercised by various protestant hierarchies, have not scrupled to apply the prophecies concerning Anti-

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* 1 John 2. 18.

christ, in a very particular manner, to those heirarchies.—Thus many of the Puritans, Quakers and others proceeded, during their tedious and severe sufferings from the merciless and remorseless rulers of the Church of England. Some protestants as well as the papists seem to apprehend that a *profession* of Christianity, or *assuming the name* of Christ, is not absolutely necessary in the formation of the Antichristian character;—which certainly contradicts the whole tenor of the scripture account of this matter.

—‘The man of perdition, Antichrist,’ says a late persecuted foreigner, † ‘is to be found in all places. Whoever makes himself judge over his brother, forcibly obtrudes on him his own imaginations, and thus sets up himself in the temple of God; he usurps Christ’s prerogative, burthenes conscience with terrible oaths for the sake of human Edicts, and persecutes the true disciples, the living members of the Church. [Whoever does these things] whether Pope or King, Sovereign or Magistrate, Clergy or Layman, is **ANTICHRIST**. Many Popes where men of parts, consideration, and piety; and there have been many worthless country parsons, great Antichrists in a small sphere.’ It does not appear that this honest and oppressed Gentleman had ever duly attended to the scripture account of Antichrist; otherwise, surely, he could never have thought of applying that term, as he does, to *any*, or *every* sort of religious oppressors. What he says of many *worthless country parsons*, is doubtless very true; but the encomium he passes upon *certain Popes*, is by no means so very clear and admissible.—That *a Pope* may

† Mr. *Buan Herport*, who was lately persecuted at *Bern* in *Switzerland*, where he was imprisoned and died---quoted by Mr. *Henry Taylor* in his *Thoughts on the grand Apostacy*, p. 31. Note.

may be *a man of parts* I am not at all inclined to deny:

—*A man of parts* may be totally destitute of every appearance, and of the smallest degree of goodness or virtue. But *consideration*, and *piety*, in this writer's sense, were never yet found in the papal chair.—If consideration and piety may be ascribed to a Pope in any shape, they must surely be altogether of the cursed and devilish kind.—In spite of all the artful and plausible representations of some late popish writers, and even the celebrated letters ascribed to Ganganelli, I must still persist in my old opinion, that the piety of a Pope, at the very best, must be exceedingly similar to the *piety of Satan*—*transformed into an angel of light*. But to return to the main subject,

It is I think sufficiently evident that the apostle in the *Revelation* describes the Antichristian party, or interest, under the names of *the Synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not*, (ii. 9. and iii. 9.) *Nicolaïtans, disciples of Balaam, the lovers and the children of Jezebel*; who encouraged fornication and idolatry, and whose doctrines are the very *depths of Satan*. (chap. 2 and 3)—These descriptions, as they are found in the second and third chapters of *Revelation*, which contain the letters to the seven Churches, evidently belong to the power under consideration as it appeared in the *Apostolic age*. Nor is there in my opinion, the least room to suppose with the *bishop of Worcester** that John in *his Epistles* applies the term *Antichrist* to

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* See Hurd on the proph. Serm. vii.—It may be said, indeed, that the *bishop* was under a kind of necessity to define the doctrine of *Antichrist* as he did:—He could not, perhaps, avoid it, without giving up his favourite idea—that it is in a strictly proper sense applicable *only* to *popery* and the *Roman Pontiff*.—The doctrine of *Antichrist*, most certainly, takes in the *Romish Church*: and it is beyond a doubt that it takes

the false teachers of his time in an *improper sense*, and only by way of *anticipation*, as the partakers of the spirit of the *future* Antichrist; or that the apostle did not consider the apostolic age as a part of that *last time* in which it had been prophesied that the *proper* Antichrist should appear: For he positively says ‘little children, it is the *last time*: And as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that IT IS THE LAST TIME. The bishop speaks far more plausibly when he says—‘As the word *Christ* is frequently used in the apostolic writings for the *Doctrine of Christ*; in which sense we are said to *put on Christ* to *grow in Christ* to *learn Christ*, and in other instances: So *Antichrist* in the abstract may be taken for a doctrine subversive of the **Christian**; and when applied to a particular man or body of men it denotes *one* who sets himself against the *spirit* of that doctrine.’ *

John

takes in the *Greek Church* too; and even those *protestant*, and *all* other **Churches**, which, under the *Christian name*, are erected upon the adulteration of true Christianity, or formed according to the manner or pattern of this world.—All the established systems of Christianity, as Dr. Priestley very justly observes (Hist. Cor. Christ. v. 2. p. 367) are *Antichristian*, being both exceedingly corrupt in their *principles*, and supported by a *peculiar* totally foreign to that of the kingdom of **Christ**. According to this, *his Lordship's own Church* as well as that of *Rome*, belongs to *Antichrist*: The hierarchy of the **Church of England**, as a late lecturer to the bishops rightly enough asserts, agrees with no state of true religion which God hath appointed, either under the Old or New Testament dispensation; but it agrees exactly with that **Church authority** by which our Lord Jesus Christ was tried, condemned and crucified. (Lect. 2. p. 48.) The reason why *some protestants* confine the idea of *Antichrist* to the *Pope and his Church*, seems very near akin to that which induces the *papists* to confine it to *Rome pagan* and its persecuting Emperors

* Hurd, as before p. 12.

John in the Revelation traces this hostile power from its first appearance in the false prophets and apostates above mentioned, all along through the various succeeding periods of its existence.—He exhibits it in all the gradations of its growth, till it ~~comes~~ answers the character of ‘ *a savage beast coming up out of the earth*; having two horns like a lamb, and a voice like a dragon—exercising all the power of the first beast before him, and causing the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the *first beast* (the roman imperial power) whose deadly wound was healed.’ ^(a) ~~¶~~ He afterwards follows this hideous and cursed monster from the time he arrived at the height of his influence and glory to the very day of his destruction; and particularly relates the redeemer’s glorious and final victory over Antichrist, when the beast is taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image; and both are cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. [†] In the advanced periods of its existence the apostle describes this hateful party under the terms and characters of Mystery, Babylon, a great trading and commercial city—a forceress—a great whore sitting upon many waters—a harlot arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication—the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth—a woman drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs:—a beast of a scarlet colour, full of names of blasphemy

[¶] Re. 13. 11. 12. [†] Ch. 19. 20.

(a) See: where is this so explained, except in The Exemplar?

blasphemy — a beast ascending up out of the earth, &c. &c. — By the *fall of Babylon*, which he represents as so complete an overthrow that it should be *found no more at all*, is most probably intended the total extirpation of the antichristian party.

Antichrist did not arrive at the height of his power till a firm alliance had been formed between his Church and the state; which was not till several ages after his first appearance. That alliance has been continued ever since; and long experience has clearly shewn that it is the main prop of the beasts kingdom. It is no kind of wonder that so sagacious a man as the late bishop *Warburton* should have discovered its importance and become a zealous advocate for it.

When the apostle represents the Antichristian beast at the summit of his dignity and dominion (chap. xiii.) he takes care to shew that a strict alliance did then subsist between him and the state or civil power — or, rather that he was, in fact, possessed of the supreme power, political and civil as well as ecclesiastical — For the cause of the first beast, the Romish imperial power, was then adopted by him, and depended upon his influence and protection. It was by his direction they that dwelt on the earth made an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live. And we are expressly told that he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed &c. (Rev. xiii. 14. 15.) At the downfall of the Roman Empire, the bishop of Rome, the chief of the Antichristian party, as *bishop Hurd* observes, 'reared his head, and by degrees found means, amidst the

marks and characteristics of this beast are given; which also points out the nature and character of the Roman Empire. John says it was like a *Leopard*. This is a very beautiful, but savage and cruel animal: It is never tamed, and is exceedingly voracious: It frequents woods and thickets, conceals itself by the sides of rivers where other animals resort to quench their thirst, and springs upon them and devours them. It takes pleasure in devouring other creatures from a disposition of mere cruelty, even when it has no need of food.—It is, in these respects, a fit representation of the bloody Roman Empire, which from its first rise has been continually engaged in bloodshed, and made war upon all the world, that would not submit to its usurped power and dominion: for even when that Empire wanted nothing, and was disturbed by none, it could not rest while there were any nations within the reach of its knowledge not subject to its jurisdiction. The glory and beauty of Rome was always spotted with blood, and its desire of conquest never ceased till its power was in a great measure broken—And even then, she continued of the same savage temper, persecuting whomsoever she could, and oppressing all that were under her dominion. This beast is represented as having feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. The *Bear* makes war with its feet, and tears its prey with its claws; and the mouth and teeth of a *Lion* are strong and terrible. All the images are used to point out that destroying and wasting Empire which cruelly devoured mankind and desolated the world.—III. The names of blasphemy pictured in this vision are a figure of those titles which were given to the Roman kings and conquerors both when they were alive and after they were dead. From the days of

the ruins of that mighty power, to advance himself into the sovereignty of Rome, and, at length, of the Christian [or rather Antichristian] world.' *

A few remarks on the xiii. chapter of Revelation which treats particularly on this subject, will not, I apprehend, be in the least improper in this place.

— 'This vision, says a late learned and judicious writer, † is a description of the Roman Empire in all its forms, both under the heathen and christian Emperors. It is a true history-piece of Rome from the time of John to the time of the height of Antichrist. The representation in the vision is exceedingly descriptive of the united characters of both the Emperors and the Popes under the image and figure of *two beasts*. I shall consider this historical picture according to its parts, and point out the moral meaning of the whole.

— I. In the picture you see a savage wild beast (*λιον*) rising out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns. This is a true image of that Empire, the seat of which was upon seven hills, and was ruled by seven different kinds of governments, from the first beginning of kingly power, till the days of the Emperors. This beast is mentioned chap. xi. 7. without any description, here it is described, and in chapter xvii. it is interpreted. This beast is said, chap. xi. to come out of the *abyss* or bottomless pit, which is of the same signification with the *sea* in this place. But to understand this part of the vision, or moral picture, we must take a view of chapter xvii. 9. and it will then be plain that John here gives a description of the Roman Empire under the figure of a wild savage beast. — II. In this picture the

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• Discourses on the prophecies vol. 2. p. 20. 21.

† Mr. James Murray in his Lectures on Rev. No. xiv.

of Romulus, it was a custom to deify their great men and worship them after they were dead; and in the latter periods, the images of the Emperors were worshipped when they were alive. In the reign of Trajan it was used as a test to try the christians by, to require them to worship the image of the Emperor along with other heathen deities. For Pliny the younger in his Epistle to that Emperor says that he observed this practice:— “A libel, says he, was brought to me, containing the names of many Christians. These after my example worshiped the Gods and thy image, which for this purpote I had ordered to be brought along with the other effigies of the deities.” Greater blasphemies could not well be uttered, than to ascribe the honour of God to mortal creatures. This was the case in that government from the beginning; — and when the eighth beast or head came, he did not abate of his claims, but increased the names of blasphemy. The titles which the *Popes* of Rome have assumed are many of them *Names of blasphemy*—such as *Christ's Vicar*, the *Lord God the Pope*, and many others.

‘It is manifest from this picture that Rome in all the different stages of its power was under the same influence. The beast, whether heathen or anti-christian had always its power from the dragon, the devil and satan. So it is said here that the *Devil gave him power, his seat and great authority*. Rome in the character of an Empire, and of a beast, has always been under the influence of the dragon—whether ruled by *kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes, dictators, emperors or popes*, it hath always been the same beast that hath received power from the dragon, and hath faithfully obeyed its master in its highest and lowest condition.

This beast has never wanted names of blasphemy since Romulus was struck with lightening, and was deified. Even the Goths and Vandals that sacked the City did not root out the blasphemy of this wild beast.

‘By looking along, we perceive one of the heads of this imperial beast *wounded* as it were to death — Let us examine this part of the picture — 1. By this *wound* is represented the overthrow of the imperial power in a great measure by the *Hunns, Goths and Vandals*. When these free-booters entered the Empire, they plundered the dominions of the Pope and the Emperor, and almost reduced the imperial power to nothing. — 2. You will see, by looking farther along, this deadly wound *healed*, and the world *wondering after the beast*, and *worshiping the dragon* which gave power unto the beast. Here we have a lively representation of the revival of the imperial power under *Charlemagne*, when he fought for the Pope and the See of Rome, and gave his power to the restoring of all the popish idolatry which the heathens had destroyed.

— 3. In this visionary fable we observe farther, another *Beast rising out of the earth*, having *two horns like a lamb and a voice like a dragon*: [which certainly denotes the bishop of Rome.] This beast exerciseth all the power of the first, whose deadly wound was healed, and causeth all the world to worship the first beast. This shews us that the two interests were joined, and that the Pope and Emperor wrought into one another’s hands in maintaining blasphemy and persecution. It was from this time forward that the seventh beast was the eighth, and so of the seventh, or, in other words, a mixture of both. *The civil and religious authorities were now united to aggrandize*

and maintain the Empire

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the See of Rome, and to support the blasphemy of the Pope and his Clergy. It is manifest from the history of those times that when the Popes assumed universal spiritual dominion, they also claimed temporal jurisdiction, and ruled with imperial sway. They even went so far as to depose kings and emperors, — and give their dominions to whomsoever they pleased; — acting as Lords of the princes of the world, and the proprietors of the whole earth. Their power, their seat and their authority were the gifts of the dragon; and their behaviour in return was altogether such as became the dragon's vassals and pensioners.—Satan gave them all these things for falling down and worshiping him; and they with all the world seem to think the bargain a very cheap one. How glaring the dissimilarity in this point of view between the conduct of Jesus Christ and that of his pretended vicars!—The latter accepted at the devil's hands what the former refused with disdain. But who will expect at this time of day to see a Pope copying after the example of the meek, the merciful, the just and self-denying Jesus? — The very attempt would unpope him at once, and blast all his schemes.

‘This beast that rose out of the earth had power to give life unto the image of the first beast that rose out of the sea, and to make it speak. This means no more than that the papal power had now given energy to the imperial jurisdiction; that the Pope had animated the power of the Emperor which before was reduced by the incursions of the Goths and Vandals. The language which this power made the other power to express was.—1. That all nations should be subject to the see of Rome; and both kings and clergy were to

to offer gifts and pay Annats to the Pope. This image of the imperial power spoke now a strange language. It required upon the severest penalties, religious obedience to the Pope, as the substitute and vicar of Christ, and demanded pecuniary rewards for spiritual benefits it pretended to confer. — 2. That the Pope should be worshiped, and have titles given him that belong to God himself; such as *his holiness*, and *god* upon earth. Those who would not worship this image of the imperial power were persecuted unto death, or, in the language of the text were *killed*. The only condition upon which men could enjoy the liberty and privileges of citizens was *receiving the mark of the beast, either in their right hand, or in their foreheads*: Which may imply — either, if they were *poor* to be *zealous papists*, or, if they were *rich* to make large *presents* to the church and bring *offerings* to the see of Rome. All were to do something for the service of holy church, or there was no residence for them on earth and as little in heaven as far as the power of the clergy could go. — *No man might buy or sell* provided he was not a good papist. All who are acquainted with the history of Rome and of the papists know very well that during the plenitude of the papal power, men that did not profess popery, and bring the appointed gifts to the Church, not only were *not allowed to buy and sell*, but were not even suffered to *live* upon the face of the earth. In short, the agreement between the papal power and the second beast, described in this chapter is so very exact and obvious that it is impossible for an impartial mind not to perceive it. They answer to one another as in water face answereth to face.

Indeed

Indeed the above representations are in a great measure applicable to other hierarchies as well as that over which the pope presides: Ecclesiastical pomp and violence, which are some of the common attributes of Antichrist, are all along clearly exhibited: — And so is also the cursed league with the world, or alliance with the state, which is the chief support of all the antichristian powers, and the grand instrument of mischief, by which they have been so long enabled to plague mankind. ‘It is nothing’, as Dr. Priestley observes, ‘but this *alliance* (an alliance’ he adds ‘which our Lord himself expressly disclaimed) that supports the grossest corruptions of Christianity; and perhaps we must wait for the fall of the civil powers before this alliance be broken. Calamitous no doubt will that time be. But what convulsion in the political world ought to be a subject of lamentation, if it be attended with so desirable an event? May the *kingdom of God* and of Christ (that which I conceive to be intended in the Lord’s prayer) truly and fully *come*, though all the kingdoms of the world be removed in order to make way for it ! ’ *

Here let me just add, that as the introduction of primitive christianity cannot be effected where the above alliance exists, so, on the other hand, the total dissolution of that same alliance can by no means take place whilst infant sprinkling, which is the main bond of it, is practised.

I am Sir &c.

there is no one who, willingly, reads and thinks
as the author does, and yet who would not
quarrel with him? to be independent, now, is to be
entitled to do what is done, and the author has
done what he has done.

LETTER III.

SIR,

THE Antichristian kingdom is called by some *the kingdom of the clergy*—‘by which, says a late writer,* is not meant *merely* the power of the Pope, of the Conclave, or of a General Council: No, nor *merely* the honour, authority and influence of any *national* clergy: but it includes all that power which *any* sort of clergy have assumed over the persons, properties or consciences of men.’ And he insists that no small number of dissenting parsons do actually belong to this same kingdom.—His plea for applying the Prophecies concerning Antichrist to the priestly tribe, being somewhat particular, and by no means unworthy of notice and consideration, I beg leave to lay before you in his own words.—‘That there are, and have been Clergymen in the Roman and in every Protestant Church,’ says he, ‘who in their social characters, separate from their clerical claims,

* The Author of a Tract entitled *The Religion of Antichrist*.

have been ornaments to society, and an honour to humanity, is no objection to this application of the prophecy; which relates not to personal characters but to the nature and spirit of their religious connection. As a man may be a very good neighbour, and in other respects an useful member of society, while yet he is a rebel against his King; so a Clergyman may have many amiable qualifications, and yet be a member of Antichrist. Yet as it is not commonly thought that any order of men have been used to wear their character the worst side outwards, it may seem that the general conduct of the Clergy in all ages, as a body of men in civil society, will warrant our saying of them the severest things that words can express. It is therefore enough for our vindication, if it be granted, that Clergymen, *as such*, are really as bad as they have always by their deeds appeared to be.'

The kingdom of Antichrist, Sir, is evidently a *worldly kingdom*, and it appears by the apostle's account* that the *Spirit of Antichrist*, which I have before mentioned, is, in fact, but the *Spirit of the World*, or, as the above writer expresses it—it is nothing else but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, *in disguise*; and accordingly antichristian teachers speak of the world, and the world heareth them; whereas every one that is of God heareth the apostles, and this is the rule by which we are to know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. This subject, Sir, deserves a more particular consideration.

‘Every man who has observed the bias of the human mind to any purpose, must have seen that the desire of *pleasure*, *honour*, or *gain* are the great springs that give motion to the course of this world. On this observation it is that politicians have founded that max-

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* 1 John. 17. 4. 6.

(a) see (a) last page.

him, that *every man has his price*, or may be influenced to your wish, if you have but skill to discover which of these has the prevalence in his desires, with ability and address to present a suitable temptation. — The different ways in which men pursue *pleasure, honour, or gain*, constitute the different characters among men; and these again take their rise in a great measure from the station in which a person appears to be placed, and are formed by his constitution, complexion, near example &c. Hence it is that the *peasant* wishes for superiority in his village, with the same spirit, and from the same principle as a *courtier* aims to be *premier* in the cabinet. The solitary monk would exceed his fellows in devotion for the same reason as the abandoned libertine would boast of being foremost in debauchery. Honour is the game after which one man flies to a hermitage and another to the field of battle: for honour is the preference we have in the esteem of others. The thirst for praise which stimulates men to illustrious actions is often beneficial to society, and the applause of society is at once the object of its wishes and the reward of its labours. The unbounded desire of this, seldom gives offence by its excess, if it be pursued fairly, without supplanting or disgracing others; because the bulk of mankind have no prospect of what we may call *poetic immortality*; nor would think they gained any thing by bartering their present ease, for all the reputation that *Homer* hath gained in this world since he was dead.

* But this indifference to the pursuit of honour in the bulk of the people arises from the prevalence of their desire of *ease and pleasure*, which seem more within their reach than honour is; even as this again is supplant-

ed in others by the desire of *gain*: for the sordid accumulation of riches can hardly consist with the expensive gratifications of other inordinate appetites either of honour or pleasure. For these reasons the votaries of honour in civil society will always be a smaller number than those of *pleasure* or *riches*; yet the applause of society, which generally attends distinguished characters in this way, will be sufficient to excite a competent number to push through all the thorny paths that are supposed to lead to the temple of fame. But if honour is to be obtained in a way that does not hazard life or limb, but is consistent with safety and ease, we may be sure to find a much greater number seeking it in *that* way than in the painful and hazardous way of sieges and battles. *Philosophy* and *religion* both propose a good degree of it, to reward the *wisdom* of the former and the *devotion* of the latter; and accordingly have, in all ages, had the votaries of honour for their most celebrated professors. And as honour has for many past ages been obtained in the religious way, with much less labour than in the way of Philosophy, or any of the sciences; accordingly the pretenders to it have been much more numerous in that way. However the mode of pursuing these, or the things by which men hope to attain them, may vary in different ages, or different parts of the world, as they also do in different persons; yet such is the general course of this world: — for * all that is in the world is the *lust of the flesh*, or the love of *pleasure*; the *lust of the eyes*, or the love of *riches*; and the *pride of life*, or the love of honour. The regulating of these pursuits, so as not to interrupt our neighbour nor disturb

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society

* 1 John ii. 16.

society, is the great business of the laws; and a regard to certain decent social regulations, such as the manners of each country lead them to adopt, produces civil decorum, with all the polite submissions in which men obtain their aims by appearing to decline them in favour of their neighbours, and gratify their own pride, &c. without affronting that of another man; for praise is a voluntary tribute, and never well paid to those who appear to demand it.

‘ The account that Moses gives of man’s primitive state, leads us to the original cause of that universal agreement which has been observed in all ages and nations respecting their pursuits in this world, and their hopes and fears respecting futurity: Or, in other words, the general agreement of men in their way of seeking happiness in this world, and in the next, arises from the original constitution of all human kind.—Man was formed to possess this lower creation as his own; hence his *love of this world*: he was formed to enjoy the good things of creation, in the full gratification of all innocent appetites; hence his *love of pleasure*: and he was formed to be head over the works of God’s hands; hence his *love of honour and rule*. He was formed to enjoy the favour of his Maker, which was his proper life *as man*; and this depended on his own obedience; in this he was distinguished from other animals, who all, according to their capacity shared with him in the enjoyment of earthly things. So that we may say, It is *natural*, or according to nature for man to love this world, to seek pleasure in it, and to grasp at its honours: and also it is according to nature for man to seek to obtain his Maker’s favour by his own obedience. When

man

man cast off his dependence on God, he lost for ever the animal happiness that he had in the possession and rule of this world: but it was still natural for him to seek it, although such a pursuit was now not only hopeless but rebellious against that sentence, Gen. iii. 17.—19. *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife &c. cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, &c. &c.* And as man lost his earthly happiness by his sin, in the same way he also lost the consciousness of his Maker's favour, which attended his obedience; and in its stead, a sense of his displeasure, which is the loss of that life which he lived superior to other animals, took place in his conscience. It is from this sense of divine displeasure, that the misery common to man arises, and this is the source of all the expiatory shifts which have been invented to appease offended deity. For it cannot be very clear that a *sinner's partial obedience* will recover the divine favour; therefore, besides morality all nations have thought some sort of atonement necessary, though they have been very far from agreeing what it should be. In this view it must be said that the course of this world, with all its abominations, whether civil or religious, bears witness to the Scripture account of the condition and constitution of man; even as the ways in which the clergy corrupt the gospel, and the scoffers blaspheme it, serve to confirm its truth by their conformity to its predictions.

‘ This universal bias of the human mind, of which I have spoken, is what the scriptures call, man's proper self: when they call him to give up these pursuits and seek superior *riches, honours and pleasures*, they call him

to deny himself. By this self-denial the true disciples of Jesus Christ are distinguished, as the followers of him who, in his life of humiliation and suffering, was the great pattern of it. As to the *ease* and *pleasure* that men seek in this world, Christ says, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life, for my sake the same shall save it.* And as to gain and riches, he saith *What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away?* And then, respecting the honour of the world, he saith, *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Fathers, and of the holy angels.*

‘Thus he teaches self-denial in opposition to the course of this world, and proposes eternal riches, honours and pleasures to be hoped for by his followers. Accordingly a regard to his words respecting self-denial, has been the badge of his *true* disciples in all ages: and on the contrary, the corrupt profession of his name, has in all ages been observed to lead its adherents to be foremost in conformity to this world. In short, as *self denial* is the badge of Christianity, *self gratification*, in some form or other, is the badge of Antichristianity.

‘The lives of the first Christians, so far as they are recorded in the New Testament, are a practical comment on Christ’s doctrine of self-denial; and shew that they believed him when he said, ¶ *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.*

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Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. He did not lead them to expect any earthly riches, honours or pleasures; but on the contrary, called them to follow him in poverty, shame and suffering; at the same time intimating that this would be the condition of his followers, in some degree, in all ages and nations: for thus he forewarns them, *¶ They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of ALL NATIONS for my name's sake.* And the encouragement he gives them to bear all this, intimates its duration.—*He that shall endure UNTO THE END the same shall be saved.* When once they were reconciled to this prospect in the present world, it would appear to them perfectly reasonable to say, *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household.* * The disciples that Jesus had in the days of his flesh, gave this reason for their attachment to him, *Thou hast the words of eternal life* ‡; but these were only a small number, and were chiefly such as had not much to lose by following him: while most of the wise, rich and honourable, despised him and his words, and still pursued the course of this world. And among the few disciples that he had, there frequently appeared a strong attachment to earthly things they had hopes of an earthly kingdom for their master, and of the highest offices in it for themselves; which mistake was never wholly eradicated, notwithstanding all that Jesus said to convince them of it, until he rose from the dead and endued them with the spirit of his kingdom, which

¶ Math. xxvii. 9

* Math. x. 25.

‡ John vi. 63.

which is opposite to the spirit of this world, that till then had influenced their desires. When Jesus rose from the dead according to the scriptures, such amazing events attended that divine work, and the gift of the Holy Ghost which followed it, that the evidence of his being the Son of God, like a mighty torrent, bore down all opposition in the minds of thousands who had been his crucifiers, and who now took side with the professors of his name. Among these the first remarkable effect of their conviction that he was the Christ, was their cheerfully giving up all the honours, riches and pleasures of this world; even their possessions which God gave to their fathers in the land of promise. —As *he* for the joy that was set before *him* endured the cross despising the shame; *so they*, in hope of the honour that cometh of God only, went forth *to him without the camp bearing his reproach*. This great change in their minds, and in the course of their lives, can only be accounted for as the effect of their believing him, according to his promise, to be gone to prepare a place for them; and that *he* would come again and receive them unto himself.

• The view we have taken of human nature, as ever leading men to grasp at honour, riches and pleasures in this world; and the fact of the first Christians giving these up for *shame, poverty and sufferings*, so going contrary to the course of this world, may lead us to these two conclusions: First, that the religion that Jesus taught his disciples is supernatural; seeing it supported its votaries, and made them happy, in acting contrary to the natural and universal bias that is in mankind, to mind earthly things. Secondly, that it is *not his religion*, however it may be dignified with his

his name, which admits of such professors into it as are setting their affections on the riches, honours or pleasures of this world. And still more obvious is this conclusion against such men as make their pretence to christianity the very means of obtaining these. For we may be very positive to assert that real christianity cannot be seen in the world in any other form than as Christ and his Apostles left it.

‘ Yet nothing can be plainer in the New Testament than the warnings of a corrupt profession of christianity suited to the lusts already described, and serving to their most exquisite gratification. It can be no wonder that a religion thus suited to the world, should be favoured and honoured by it; for the world will love his own: but the religion of Jesus forbids its professors to expect any such thing. The hatred of the world will always be provoked where there is the same reason for that hatred as was in Christ’s disciples in the beginning——“If ye were of the world the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore the world hateth you*†.” This is a reason that will hold good as long as the world and Christ’s disciples are to be distinguished; for *they* are not of the world any more now than when he was with them. And yet, how foreign soever it is to scripture style, the phrase, the *christian world*, has been current language ever since the nations have assumed the christian name: and thus it must needs have been, or the Scriptures could not have been fulfilled. But a man who knows nothing about what has passed in the christian world, if he reads the New Testament with any attention, cannot fail to see that the christian religion

† John xv. 19.

religion must be greatly corrupted, before it can be the prevailing vogue or the path to ease and honour in any nation upon earth.'

' The disciples indeed, as was before intimated, were very desirous that the profession of christianity should be attended with worldly ease and protection ; but Christ said to them † ' Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am not come to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in-law against her mother in-law: And a man's foes shall be they of his own household '

— On these accounts a man who takes the religion that he commonly sees professed and practised in this country, or in any other part of what is called the christian world, to be real christianity, must be straitened to find any more use for the greatest part of the New Testament than for an old Almanac. Nor could the first christians be justified from the most egregious fanaticism in choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. No rational account could be given why they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.'

' Nothing, Sir, can be more striking than the contrast between primitive Christianity and that which is now the popular religion of this kingdom.—The one is characterized by *self denial*—the other by *self gratification*. How shall we account for this difference?—

' It must, doubtless, arise either from the spirit of the world towards the profession of Christianity being vastly

vastly changed for the better, or else from that profession being vastly changed for the worse. I know the *former* is generally supposed to be the case, but this is so opposite to any thing that Jesus Christ gave his followers to expect in this world, and so inconsistent with the opposition that is said to be between the Spirit of the world and the Spirit that is of God, that we must either give up the New Testament, or conclude that the profession of the religion it teaches is greatly corrupted. — And this conclusion will be more determinate if we observe the *predictions* of the New Testament, which contain the plainest warnings of such corruption, and of the *ease* and *honour* with which it should be attended. If the *silence* of Christ and his Apostles, concerning any honour or ease that should ever be gotten in this world by following him — if the *fact* concerning his first followers being sufferers ; and the currency of the New Testament language being only suited to support and comfort such under their shame and sufferings ; — If these things have too little force to prove that the religion of Jesus was never intended to be honourable in this world ; * yet we cannot decently say that the *predictions* of Christ and his Apostles concerning the condition of his Church to the end of the world, are of no weight in this matter.

‘ These predictions not only foretell such an Apostacy, but also describe how it should be brought about, in direct opposition to the self-denial that Christ taught ; and so as to become the source of every covetous,

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* i. e. whilst the world continues corrupt and wicked, which it doubtless will do till the arrival of that grand period when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

haughty and sensual gratification.' — This will become sufficiently clear by duly attending to the prophecies quoted in my last letter.

' The beginning of the Apostacy is, by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 11. 12.) ascribed to the influence of the course of this world, and of false teachers. He foretells that *abounding iniquity* should cool the love of many of his followers, and so cause them to forsake his ways ; — And he shews that false teachers, or the Clergy should be the promoters and leaders of this defection : — Them he represents (Matt. vii. 15.) as *ravelling wolves in sheeps cloathing* — referring, undoubtedly, to their wolf-like greediness, and love of this world, to which they made their profession subservient. Some of these, he told them, would make more than ordinary pretensions to zeal for bringing men to Christ, and give manifold directions for their coming to him, like our modern and most popular enthusiastic declaimers. *If any man shall say to you, Lo HERE IS CHRIST, or Lo, HE IS THERE ; believe him not : for false christ's and false prophets shall arise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.* But take ye heed : behold I have foretold you all things (Mark xiii. 21.) ' These and many more such like words of Christ plainly predict, that under the influence of abounding iniquity, Christianity would be corrupted by avaricious teachers, who under good appearances would practise all the arts of self-seeking men.

' The writings of the Apostles also, as I have shewn, contain a great number of predictions to the same purpose — ' And that the mischief was to come by the

the christian teacher's attachment to this world, is obvious from their charging some, even in their own time, with serving not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches, deceiving the hearts of the simple: And their warning concerning others, who thro' *covetousness* should, *with feigned words* make merchandise of them. By all these instances, and many more that might easily be produced, we clearly see that the love of this world was predicted to be the spring of an apostacy from the faith, and that men would use the Christian profession to advance their living and station in this world. And whenever we see a religion called by the Christian name whose leaders are either in possession or pursuit of ease and honour, we may suspect that it is the religion which Christ and his Apostles gave so frequent warnings of. At least we must say it has this to recommend it to worldly men, that it is free from that inconvenient offensive thing, the cross of Christ; and has no occasion for the primitive self-denial, nor for the supporting spirit of grace. And if this profession should appear to be consistent with, and subservient to the course of this world, as above described, we shall be in no hazard of a mistake, in calling it, the religion of the Man of Sin.*

From

* For a fuller display of this subject see the tract last mentioned --- The author's views of it are so similar to my own, and, in my opinion, so well expressed, that I have through the foregoing pages of *this letter*, in a great measure, made use of his very words-- Indeed I despaired of finding any other words that would convey my ideas better.

Here, moreover, I cannot help acknowledging that I was lately agreeably surprized in reading the *British Biography* (an anonymous work of great merit, ascribed, as I am told, to the learned Dr. Towers) to find that the above doctrine was well known, and zealously maintained in this Country at so dark a period as the reign of Henry V.---Even in that very period no less a person than that eminent martyr and illustri-

From what has been observed, Sir, it unavoidably follows — 1. That the institutions of CHRIST, as they lead to the exercise of self-denial, run counter to the course of this world, and so are in disesteem among the men of the world. And 2. — That the institutions of *Antichrist*, on the other hand, whose leading characteristic is self-gratification, are perfectly agreeable to the course, and spirit of the world, and therefore must enjoy the worlds esteem. — *Antichrist's ordinances,*

ous friend and disciple of Wickliff, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, boldly, and in the face of his bitterest enemies bore witness to this same truth. — ‘Where do you find it written in all God’s law,’ said that excellent man to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and his other unjust and remorseless judges, ‘that you may thus sit in judgment upon the life of man? — Hold — Annas and Caiaphas may perhaps be quoted in your favour’ — ‘Ay (said one of the doctors) and Christ too, for he judged Judas. — ‘I never heard that he did, (replied Lord Cobham) He pronounced indeed a woe against him, as he doth still against you who have followed Judas’s steps: for since his venom hath been shed into the Church you have never followed CHRIST, but vilely betrayed his cause and dishonoured his religion.’ — The Archbishop upon this, desired him to explain what he meant by *venom*. — I mean by it (said he) the *wealth* of the Church; your temporal possessions and lordships. When the Church was first endowed, as an author of your own pathetically expresses it, an angel in the air cried out *Woe, Woe, Woe: this day is venom shed into the Church of God*. Since that time, instead of laying down their lives for religion, as was common in the early ages, the bishops of Rome have been engaged in a constant scene of persecution, or in cursing, murdering, poisoning or fighting with each other. — How striking a contrast is there between the Character of CHRIST and that of him who now pretends to be the head of the Church! CHRIST was full of meekness and mercy; but the pope of pride and tyranny. CHRIST was destitute of all temporal possessions and freely forgave all the many injuries which he received; but the Pope abounds in wealth and is cruel and vindictive. — A little after being asked — ‘What do you particularly affirm of the Pope?’ ‘That he and you together (answered Lord Cobham) make whole the great Antichrist. — He is the head, you Bishops and Priests are the body, and the begging Friars are the tail, that covers the filthiness of you both with lies and sophistry.’ See Brit. Biog. vol. 1. p. 161 &c.

ordinances, then, may be known by their being in *favour* with the *world's children*, as *those of Christ* may, by their being in *disfavour* with them.—Let us see how this will apply to the subject in debate betwixt us. I will begin with the ordinance of *believers baptism*. Does the world approve of this? No — It is *every where* *spoken against*. All ranks of worldly minded men — the devout as well as the profane, most heartily despise and condemn it. Nor is this peculiar to the present age: the same hath been its lot in all ages, even from the very commencement of christianity. The primitive Christians, Sir, as well as we, have been reproached by their enemies on account of their attachment to this ordinance. Those of Judea in the *first age*, as Dr. Gill affirms, were called by the Jews, in a way of contempt, *APOSTATES* that *received the doctrine of baptism, and were DIPT in Jordan*. † There is so striking a similarity between this and the treatment which the modern baptists commonly meet with from their religious neighbours, that one may venture to pronounce them the fruits of the same spirit. — From the contempt which the world pours upon this ordinance, I infer, that it is *not of men*; for the world *loves his own**: And that religious institute that is *not of men*, must, surely, be *from heaven*. This is clearly implied in that memorable question, ‘The baptism of John whence is it? from heaven or of men? §’ — As much as to say, that all religious rites must proceed from either of these two sources. This then, I cannot but look upon as one proof of the divine authority of the practice for which I have the honour to contend.

Now Sir, I beg leave to apply the same doctrine to your side of the question, to see how well *infant sprinkling*

† See Gill on Mat. xxi. 6. * John xv. 19. § Mat. xxi. 25.

Viced Rev. xvi. 5

ling will bear this test. Let me then ask, *Whence is this usage? from heaven or of men?*—If from heaven, it must, like all the appointments of heaven in the Christian Church, and agreeable to the character of the blessed Head of that Church, be despised and *disallowed of men*. But is this really the fate of *infant sprinkling?* By no means. Not one in the whole swarm of human traditions is more esteemed and *careffed by men* than this ceremony.¹² The world *wonders after it* as it does after the *beast* himself. Had none discovered a hearty attachment to infant sprinkling but *Priests and their dependants*, even then, one might venture to conclude (at least with an eye to the general character of those gentry) that that rite is quite *consistent with the spirit of the world*—Such an attachment *in them* might be easily explained by that notable declaration of the *ancient Ephesian Clergy*, *By this craft we have our wealth*; which is very expressive of a worldly temper and principle: But when we see other descriptions of natural men, and even such as are removed to some of the greatest distances from the wealth or emoluments of the priesthood, among the number of the warmest votaries of the practice in question, the conclusion is irresistible, and amounts even to a demonstration.

Nothing upon earth, Sir, is more evident than that this rite, for which you are so zealous an advocate, enjoys the firm friendship and applause of the world; and hence, one may with the utmost safety infer, That it is *of men*, or, in other words, is *nothing more than an ordinance of Antichrist.**

I am Sir &c.

* It is impossible to put a less censorious construction upon the above circumstance

LETTER

LETTER IV.

SIR,

HAVING in my two last letters given a description of *Antichrist* and his *Spirit*, I shall now proceed to exhibit a short view of his operations and progress during the first ages of Christianity.—Here then, let it be observed that as the *spirit of antichrist* appears to be no other than the *spirit of the world* in disguise, so the first acts of *Antichrist* aimed at subverting the *spirit of the Gospel*, which ever opposes that of the *world*. This plainly appears by the conduct of the *judaizing teachers*, who were the first enemies of Christianity that wore the mask of *friendship*. In these, therefore, *Antichrist* may be said to have made his first appearance. That these teachers aimed at the subversion of the *spirit of the gospel* is very certain; for they laboured with all their might to preserve the

circumstance, or draw from it a more favourable inference, without contradicting the very tenor of the New Testament revelation, which is expressed in that truly important maxim, *The friendship of the world is enmity with God*. Jam. iv. 4.

the Jewish hierarchy, or, at least, to form Christianity upon that model. This would have made the Christian Church, to all intents and purposes, a national Church and a worldly sanctuary—It would have effectually shut up the way unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, &c; and would have driven the disciples of Jesus back unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness and darkness and tempest; and laid fast on their necks a most heavy and galling yoke, inevitably reducing them to a state of intolerable drudgery and thraldom. In short, had these men prevailed, Christ's kingdom could not have answered his own description of it;—for the kingdom at the head of which they wanted to set him, was in very deed *a kingdom of this world*. The truth is they wished to make him such a king as those of this earth; and to form his kingdom so as his subjects might have easy access to the secure enjoyment of earthly honour, pleasure, and wealth. Nothing can be more evident than that the Apostles considered this judaizing system as destructive of Christianity. In their consultation relating to the disagreement at Antioch (See Acts xv.) they speak of it in terms of the highest disapprobation. And Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians describes the judaizing teachers as *troublers of the Churches, and perverters of the Gospel of Christ.**—Their system he represents as *a yoke of bondage*—A doctrine so hostile to the gospel, that wherever it prevails — it makes men *debtors to do the whole law*, and excludes them from having an interest in Christ. For he says that *Christ shall profit them nothing*, and also that he is *become of no effect unto them*†. Those whom these teachers had drawn

* Gal. i. 7.

† Chap. v. 1. 2. 4.

drawn away, he also exhibits as foolish, bewitched, disobedient to the truth, and fallen from grace†.

The measures adopted and pursued by these judaizers in their opposition to the apostolic doctrine, were, as I before intimated, the *first acts* of Anti-christ.—Here we find him strongly attached to judaism, and labouring to introduce and establish it, as the very ground and model of Christianity. But we must in no wise imagine that his attachment or favour is confined to the *jewish* system. He favoured judaism because it was a *national* religion — a kingdom of this world; and he afterwards favoured the different pagan systems, for the same reason. For in gentile lands, wherever the gospel prevailed, we find him continually employed in the same accommodating business that had before engaged his attention in Judea. In the *eastern* countries he appeared constantly and strenuously labouring to incorporate with christianity the religious system that was there in vogue.* In *Greece* and *Asia Minor*, where the grecian philosophy prevailed, he observed the same mode of proceeding with respect to that system.—At *Rome* also we find him very early taking the like method with the superstition which the pagan Romans had embraced and established. The self same course he afterwards appears to have pursued among the *Celtic* and other western nations. This very method, Sir, the *man of sin* seems to have pretty uniformly adopted in all his succeeding operations—especially since he obtained the patronage of the civil powers. The christianity, as it is called, which Constantine and his successors patronized, was certainly formed upon this

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† Gal. iii. 1. and v. 4.

* This was the Egyptian or Oriental philosophy, styled *gnosis* or science; for an account of which see Michaelis's Lectures, lect. 100 and 101, Formey's Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p. 41. &c. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p. 107—112. Ed. 8vo. 1774. —

accommodating principle. This was what made it so perfectly agreeable to the state of corrupt man, and brought the world so readily to embrace it. They saw the very spirit of the old Superstition retained in the new; and could not but view the latter as a superstructure erected upon the very foundation, and according to the very model of the former, and which was built, in a great measure, with the very same materials. † This celebrated system, in process of time, begat others in its own likeness: — Of which those of the Greeks and Romans are the principal. From the Romish hierarchy are descended all the religious establishments in this part of the world: And it must be owned that it has a most numerous and thriving progeny. What are all the hierarchies produced by the Reformation, from those of Luther and the mad-men of Munster, to those of most recent origin, but the offspring of the Romish Whore? Their countenance and their manners, and every thing about them, loudly proclaim their lineage. (a)

Satan transformed into an Angel of light — The ministers of Satan transformed as the ministers of righteousness — Deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ — False apostles — Wolves in sheeps cloathing, are some of the scripture expressions, as I have already shewn, by which the chiefs of the Antichristian party are pointed out. Such expressions are, doubtless intended to de-

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† A very great part of the materials which composed the above System, where certainly of pagan extraction: and it appears that the grand pretence for introducing them was, to accommodate Christianity to the prejudices of the Pagans. (see Middleton's Letter from Rome, and P. S. 5th, Ed.) upon a similar pretence they became afterwards, with considerable additions, a part of the popish System---and for no better reason were they at the Reformation adopted by the various protestant Hierarchies:

(a) the cornerstone of all which is built

note their *disguised* character: For this detestable party is, in truth, a sort of masquerade. Of course, its opposition to the truth is not open and avowed, but *fly* and *secret* — even under pretence of the most cordial esteem for it. Hence, the man of sin aims at the subversion of the Gospel, not by attempting to extirpate it, or blot out its very memory, as some of its pagan foes would fain have done — but by *corrupting* it. The first Christian doctrine, in my opinion, which he attempted to corrupt, is that contained in our Lord's Confession before Pilate — 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' The success which the christian judaizers met with, in their endeavours to persuade men that the road to their worldly sanctuary was no other than the kings high road to the heavenly Jerusalem, is a plain proof that this doctrine had been greatly corrupted. But Antichrist did not stop here — He soon proceeded to other parts of Christianity. The doctrine of Christ's *incarnation* appears to have been attacked by this crafty adversary at a very early period. Even in the Apostolic age he is expressly charged with not confessing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; ‡ which clearly implies a *denial* of that fact. This corrupt notion soon prevailed; and the man of sin presently experienced its utility. His disciples the *Gnostics* seem to have been the first that adopted it. Many of them declared 'that Jesus Christ had no true body, but only an appearance, by which he deceived the eyes of men. Others of them who saw that this was directly contrary to the express words of scripture, acknowledged that Jesus Christ had a real body, but that it was not of its nature visible, being composed of a celestial matter, incorruptible, imperceptible to

the eyes of men, formed of the same matter with his soul, and that it was visible only by an effect of the will of God.* Notwithstanding this seeming disagreement, which looks somewhat like Antichrist divided against himself, it is very evident that both parties were most cordially agreed with respect to the main object — i. e. bringing the incarnation of Christ into discredit: for that fact was disallowed by the one side as well as the other; since those who owned *in words* that our Lord had a *real body*, did not mean a body made up of flesh and blood, or a real human body, but one of a celestial and spiritual nature.†

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* See Formey's Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p. 43:

† 'The notions of this sect [the Gnostics] concerning Jesus Christ, says Mosheim, were impious and extravagant: For though they considered him as the son of the supreme God sent from the *Pleroma*, or habitation of the everlasting father, for the happiness of miserable mortals; yet they entertained unworthy ideas both of his Person and offices. They denied his *deity*, looking upon him as the son of God, and consequently inferior to the father; and they rejected his *humanity*, upon the supposition that every thing concrete and corporeal is in itself essentially and intrinsically evil. From hence the greatest part of the Gnostics denied that Christ was cloathed with a *real body*, or that he suffered *really*, for the sake of mankind, the pains and sorrows which he is said to have sustained, in the sacred history. They maintained that he came to mortals with no other view, than to deprive the tyrants of this world of their influence upon virtuous and heavenborn souls, and, destroying the empire of these wicked spirits, to teach mankind how they might separate the divine mind from the impure body, and render the former worthy of being united to the father of spirits.' Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p 110. Such were some of the principles of the Gnostic System, which were probably what an inspired writer styles *Science falsely so called; philosophy and vain deceit*; and which he affirms is after the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. See 1 Tim. vi. 20. Col. ii. 8. --- 'Launching beyond the age of the Apostles, says Dr. Priestley (in his Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit) we find ourselves in a wide sea of this vain philosophy, partly of grecian, and partly of immediate oriental extraction; which however, was ultimately the same thing. The most distinguished of the Christian Fathers, as Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, &c. were deeply versed

The denial of the *incarnation*, unavoidably and speedily produced that of the *sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ*. And it appears from what we read in the first chapter of John's Gospel that the doctrine of his deity also was attacked much about the same time (a)

As to the doctrine of the *resurrection* we are very sure that it was perverted as early as the apostle Paul's time. Antichrist began then boldly to urge that the resurrection was a partial event, which was, forsooth, already *past*; so that the christians then living had no reason to hope that it would ever take place with respect to them. ¶ Thus he daringly attempted to rob the believer of that serenity, fortitude and triumph which he possesses in the belief of a happy and glorious resurrection, as brought to light by the gospel. This was perverting the very fundamentals of the Gospel with a witness. (b)

Such was the manner, Sir, in which the Man of Sin proceeded with those grand truths of Christianity. It cannot be at all strange that he should take a similar method with its positive institutions.

Of the two ordinances of the Gospel, it appears, that it was the *Lord's Supper* that first felt the foul hands of Antichrist. He began very soon to try his cursed experiments upon that ordinance; of which the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians* is a sufficient

in this philosophy, and studiously covered the *offence of the cross*, by giving such an idea of the Author of their religion, and the tenets of it, as was calculated to strike the philosophical part of the world.' Here I beg leave to subjoin---If such be really the character of the christian Fathers, not excepting even the *most distinguished* of them, it would, surely, be no kind of *wonder*, nor yet any vast advantage to the cause of paedobaptism, if it could be made to appear that they were all strenuous advocates for infant baptism---No certain traces, however, of this practice have been yet discovered farther back than the *beginning of the third century*:

cient proof. The scandalous proceedings there recorded are, doubtless, to be ascribed to the vile interposition of this subtle adversary. They aimed at nothing less than a total perversion and transformation of the ordinance, and must be allowed altogether worthy of their author. He acted through the whole affair as though he meant to convert this ordinance into the very likeness of the pagan *Bacchanals*; which, certainly, would have been a most effectual method of rendering it *pala-table* to the men of the *world*—an object which he never loses sight of in any of his operations. It is very probable that the Apostle Paul stopped his career at Corinth for that time, and that that check deterred him for a season, from meddling any further with this institution. Be that as it may, it is very evident that it became, after the death of the Apostles, an object of his very particular attention, and that his attempts upon it then, fully answered his wishes. He very soon converted it into a formidable *mystery**, which made it exceedingly

* ' By the term *mystery* was meant, originally, the more secret parts of the *Heathen* worship, to which select persons only were admitted, and those under an oath of secrecy. Those mysteries were also called *initiations*; those who were initiated were supposed to be pure and holy, while those who were not initiated were considered as impure and profane; and by these mysteries the heathens were more attached to their religion than by any other circumstance whatever. This made the first Christians (many of whom were first converted from heathenism, and who could not at once, divest themselves of their fondness for pomp and mystery) wish to have something of this nature, which was so striking and captivating, in the Christian religion; and the rite of the Lord's Supper soon struck them, as what might easily answer this purpose.' Priestley's Hist. Cor. Christ. vol. 2. p. 4. 5. In process of time, it became usual, as the same writer observes, to call this rite a *tremendous mystery*, a *dreadful solemnity*, and *terrible to angels*. *Baptism* too, was presently involved in the same mysterious predicament; and both together were called *the divine mysteries*, in imitation, without doubt, of the pagan rites above mentioned. And that the resemblance between this improved christianity and paganism might be still more obvious and striking, what was called *the discipline of secrecy* was adopted; in imitation likewise, most

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ceedingly subservient to his views and interest. From the idea of mystery, the transition to that of a *miraculous and saving virtue* is quite natural and easy. Accordingly, it appears that as soon as the mysteriousness of this ordinance was admitted, men began to ascribe to it a variety of extraordinary virtues, all unknown to the primitive christians. It was soon reckoned a sovereign remedy for the various disorders of the body*, and a sure preservative in the perils of journeys and voyages. ‘ Some of the ancient Christians’, says Dr. Priestley, ‘ used to bury the sacramental bread together with the dead ; thinking, no doubt, that it would be of as much use to them in that long journey, as it had been in other shorter ones.’ In short, the salutary effect of this ordinance on the *body* was thought to be such as would render it *incorruptible*, and insure it of a happy and glorious resurrection. Nor were the virtues ascribed to it, with respect to the *soul*, in any respect less wonderful and important ; for it became very early, an established and common principle, that

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certainly, of the *oath of secrecy*, before noticed. (See Mosheim vol. 1. p. 235. Tertullian is supposed to allude to these innovations, when he says, ‘ It is of the very nature of mysteries to be concealed, as those of Ceres in Samothrace.’ (Apol. cap. 7. Opera, p. 8.--See Priestley, as before p. 5.) The teachers now were not allowed to explain these pretended mysteries, not only to unbelievers, but even to their very pupils, the Catechumens. See Formey’s Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p. 73. and Mosheim’s, vol. 1. p. 325. The latter seems to think it the most decent and satisfactory argument alledged in favour of this custom, with respect to the Lord’s Supper. ‘ That by these *mysterious* proceedings, the desire of the *catechumens* would naturally burn to penetrate, as soon as was possible, the *sublime secret*, and that they would thereby be animated to prepare themselves with double diligence for receiving this privilege.’ This is, certainly, as good an argument as many that are used in favour of some religious usages in modern times--The very choicest arguments for infant sprinkling not excepted.

* Austin says, “ If any one fall sick, let him receive the body and blood of Christ, and let him keep a part of this little body, that he may

it conferred (in conjunction with baptism) the invaluable benefits of remission of sins, original and actual, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, justification, and eternal life*. These absurd notions were productive of equally absurd practices. Among these we may justly reckon the administering the Lord's Supper to infants—to the sick and dying, and offering it even to the dead†. These abuses were accompanied with a multitude of others of inferior note; and in a course of years nothing belonging to this ordinance was suffered to remain in its original state. The wine, which originally made one of the two elements in this divine rite, was now ordered to be *mixed with water*‡. By degrees, the wine was in some places entirely left out, and water used in its stead. In process of time the cup was totally withheld from the laity, in direct contradiction of the plain implication of our Lord's words

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find the accomplishment of what St. James says, *Let those who are sick go to the Church to receive strength of body.*” This same Father also mentions a woman who had made a plaster of the sacramental bread for a sore eye. See Priestley, as before, p. 13. This Austin was one of the greatest of all the ancient Champions for infant baptism, and one of the earliest. ---He was equally zealous for infant communion, as for infant baptism—and ascribed to both the Ordinances a saving efficacy.---See Peirce's *Essay on giving the Eucharist to Children*, p. 21.

* See Peirce's *Essay as before*, p. 26. 99.

† Formey says that there are examples in Africa, in the Fourth Century, of Priests baptizing the *dead*, and offering them the Eucharist. (vol. 1. p. 73.) And truly, that was altogether as scriptural and edifying a practice as administering those Ordinances to infants.

‡ *Cyprian*, one of the earliest advocates for infant baptism, and the very first who so much as mentioned it, except *bis master Tertullian* (as Sir Isaac Newton in one of his letters to Le Clerk calls him) and *Origen*, was a great zealot for the above *mixture*, and he quotes *Scripture*, forsooth, in support of it. ‘One great argument he uses (Epist. 63.) is, that this signifies the union between Christ and his people: ‘For as the Wine represents the blood of Christ, so the Water signifies the People, according to that text, Rev. xvii, 15. The waters that

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(Mat. xxvi. 27.) *Drink ye all of it*—as well as of the universal custom of the primitive churches. On the other hand, even the *bread* was at length left off, and *wafers* introduced in the room of it*. The monstrous and horrid doctrines of *transubstantiation* and *consubstantiation*† fairly compleated the abuses of this ordinance, and brought the Son of Perdition to his *ne plus ultra*, in this quarter.

What I am going to add, you, Sir, will not perhaps, very readily allow. But it is certainly fact.— I mean, *That the seeds of the vilest corruptions which afterwards took place, relating to this ordinance, were sown by the most renowned FATHERS* (as they are called) *of the*

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thou sawest are peoples, &c. (See Peirce's Essay as before, p. 69.) This same Father, also argues for an equality of grace given to infants and adults from the prophet Elisha's stretching himself on the Shunamite's child (2. Kings iv. 34.) and tells us that in that place *a spiritual equality*, and such as is in the esteem of God, is intimated to us.----See Stennett's Letters to Addington,² No. 16. p. 243. After seeing these happy specimens of Cyprian's theological sagacity and penetration, one cannot think it at all marvellous that he should find scripture for infant baptism.----Much good may his patronage do to our paedobaptist brethren.

† *Transubstantiation* is thought not to have been formally broached till about the begining of the 7th century.---It was afterwards countenanced by the 2d council of *Nice*. But was not established as an article of faith till the 4th. *Lateran council*, held in the year 1215. and in the pontificate of *Innocent III*. Some indeed, have affirmed that it was not properly established till the council of *Trent*. See *Abstract, with Improvements, of the Hist. of Popery*, vol. i. p. 430.---*Consubstantiation* is not so ancient as the other. It is thought to have taken its rise in the 13th century, under the management of *John* surnamed *Pungens Afinus*, of the University of *Paris*. See *Mosheim* vol. 3. p. 106. *Luther* and others of the *Reformers* were violent *zealots* for this abominable tenet. Of all the leaders of the *Reformation*, *Carolstad* and *Zwinglius* were almost the only men who entertained scriptural notions of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

a) see p-86, (a)

the second, third and fourth centuries §. How ridiculous,
then

§ *Ignatius*, speaking of the heretics, says 'They abstain from the Eucharist and Prayer, because they don't own the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, that suffered for our sins, and which the Father in his goodness raised from the dead. They therefore who speak against the gift of God, die in their contentions: But it were better for them to love it, that they might rise again.' (Shorter Epistle to the Church of Smyrna Sect. 7.) Elsewhere he expresses himself thus---'Breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, an antidote that we may not die, but live in Jesus Christ for ever.' (Epist. to the Ephes. Sect. 20.---See Peirce, as before, p. 61.) 'We do not consider,' says *Justin Martyr*, this bread and wine as common bread and wine. For, as Jesus Christ was made flesh, and had flesh and blood to procure our salvation, so we learn that this aliment, over which prayers have been made, is changed, and that by which our flesh and blood are nourished is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, For the Evangelists teach us that Jesus Christ took bread, and said *this is my body*. He also took the wine and said *this is my blood*.' (Opera, p. 408.---See Priestley, as before, p. 8.) 'How,' says *Irenæus*, do they say that the flesh turns to corruption, and does not partake of life, since 'tis nourished by the body and blood of the Lord? Let them therefore either alter their opinion, or forbear to offer these things. But our opinion is agreeable to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our opinion. But we offer to him the things that are his own, harmoniously declaring the communication and union between our flesh and the spirit. For as bread which comes out of the earth, after the consecration prayer, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, the one earthly, the other heavenly; so our BODIES having received the Eucharist, ARE NO LONGER CORRUPTIBLE, having the hope of a resurrection to eternal life.' (Lib. iv. c. 2. p. 327.) In another place the same Father thus expresses himself.---As the wood of the vine, being turned down into the earth, brings forth fruit in his time, and a grain of corn falling into the earth, and being dissolved, is raised manifold by the spirit of God, who contains all things; and these things through the wisdom of God, come to be of use to men, and receiving the word of God, are made the Eucharist, that is the body and blood of Christ: So our bodies being nourished thereby, and being laid in the Earth, and dissolved there, shall arise in their proper time, the word of God bestowing a resurrection upon them to the glory of God, even the Father.' (Lib. v. c. 2. p. 399.---See Peirce's Essay, as before, p. 60.) *Ignatius*, *Justin*, and *Irenæus*, flourished in the 2d Century, and stand in the first rank among the Fathers of that

then, must it be for Protestants to rely upon the authority of these Fathers, or make any account of their judgment in religious matters! Scarce any thing can be more dissimilar than the writings of these men, and those of the inspired pen-men of the New Testament. The latter exhibit a most beautiful and perfect system, bearing every necessary mark of divinity, and adapted to a kingdom *not of this world*.—The former a heap of abominable errors, incongruities and absurdities, suited to the religious views and maxims of the world, and unquestionably dictated by the spirit of Antichrist.

Judaism and Heathenism, but especially the latter, became the ground-work of the religion of those fathers and their successors. In both were seen a worldly priesthood and sanctuary.—Each had an earthly high priest at its head.—Each was in alliance with the state.—*Each admitted infants to a participation of its ordinances*, and allowed a claim to spiritual privileges upon carnal considerations. In short.—Each was a kingdom of this world ; and in that view the very reverse of

age. Their successors abundantly improved their conciliating scheme and never rested till they had quite completed it. The wild conceits entertained respecting the Lord's Supper in the *third* Century, have been already seen in the quotations from Tertullian and Cyprian, who flourished in that age ; as those entertained in the *fourth* have been seen in the quotation from *Austin*.—To the latter I beg leave to add another from *Cyril of Jerusalem*, one of his cotemporaries.—“Since Christ has said, *this is my body*, who can deny it ? since he has said, *this is my blood*, who can say it is not so ? He formerly changed water into wine, and is he not worthy to be believed, when he says that he changed the wine into his blood ? Wherefore let us, with full assurance of faith take the body and blood of Christ. For under the form of bread the body is given to them, and under the form of wine his blood ?...See *Priestley's Hist.* as before, p. 8. 9.

of christianity. But those innovators discovered, upon the whole, a greater partiality to heathenism than they did to judaism. In truth, the former best suited their views, as it tended to promote more effectually their favourite ends. Hence paganism, for which the anti-christian party, from the very first, entertained excessive fondness, was, in process of time, imitated by them with the most notorious exactness. Even the *pagan* custom of *kissing the sovereign pontiff's toe* (first introduced in the memorable pontificate of *Caligula*) and that of keeping the *heads* of priests *bald*, were not forgotten. So nearly did this image of the beast resemble him! The spirit, the model and the materials of their system, were, as I said before, borrowed from the pagans. The form of the heathen ecclesiastical jurisdiction was, accordingly, copied by the ancient christian doctors. Their hierarchy, like the *pagan*, was national and worldly. They totally disapproved of our Lord's doctrine (Math. xx. 25, 26.) which shews that his kingdom differs from those of this world, among other things, in that it shall have no princes to exercise dominion over his subjects, nor any *great men* to exercise authority upon them. Such levelling notions would by no means suit them. Worldly dignity was their favourite object; to obtain which they were determined, like *Israel* in the days of *Samuel*, to have a king over them, after the fashion of the world, *that they also might be like all the nations*. (see 1 Sam. viii. 5. 19. 20.) The Pagans had their *Pontifex Maximus*, and other ghostly leaders in abundance, subordinate to him—down in regular gradation to the directors of village and rural devotion—or to the ragged mendicants, who used to travel from house to house, with sacks on their backs, and, from an opinion of their sanctity, raise large contributions

contributions of money, bread, wine, and all kinds of victuals, for the support of their fraternity. Here may be seen, Sir, the prototype and origin of Popes, Patriarchs, and Cardinals, oecumenical, metropolitan, and suffragan Bishops, Priests, &c. down to the begging Friars and Hermits, or to the Curate, Clerk and Sexton of a parish church. Not only the orders of officers and dignities in the antichristian hierarchies, are for the most part derived from the Pagans, but their sacred ceremonies appear to be so too.—Among those religious rites which are evidently of Pagan extraction, that of *sprinkling* clean water, seems to be one. There does not appear in all the mosaic ritual any such rite as *sprinkling mere water*. ‘There was,’ indeed, as a very sensible writer observes, ‘a sprinkling of water mixed with blood, and of water mixed with the ashes of an heifer; but I think no such thing as sprinkling *simple* water’ (see Letters to Bp. Hoadly ^{1/2} No. 3.) The same writer afterwards observes concerning the *water of separation*, which was sprinkled on the unclean, and which is called *water*, simply, that it was, in fact, a composition of various ingredients, viz. the ashes of a burnt heifer, cedar wood, hysop, and scarlet, all mixed with the water. It is to the Pagan temples, Sir, that we must look for the origin of the practice of sprinkling with clean water. There, near the entrance, in a situation some-what similar to that where the *font* stands in modern temples, stood a *vase* of holy water, with which the congregation was sprinkled. And as it is well known that the heathens brought their infants to partake of their sacred ordinances, I think I may safely venture to fix here the origin of *infant sprinkling*.—The *popish* horses and asses are religiously sprinkled, as well as the men, women and children;

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^{1/2} in my Pamph: Vol: XI.

but our paedobaptist dissenters sprinkle only their *children* — except when they are applied to, by such adults as have not undergone the ceremony in their childhood. The practice of the latter party may, perhaps, be termed the most decent of the two, though not the most agreeable to the prototype. As to the New Testament, they are both equally wide of that, and absolutely unwarranted by it; so that there is no more of Christianity in the sprinkling of an infant, even though he be the offspring of Christian parents, than there is in the sprinkling of an ass — and none at all of it in either. [see Middletons Letter from Rome.—Abstract with imp. of the Hist. of Popery, vol. I.—Walsh's Hist. of the Popes, p. 111.—Littlebury's Herodotus, 2d Ed. vol. I. p. 157.—Mosheim i. 163, 319, &c.]

Having mentioned infant communion (so called) as one of the ancient corruptions of Christianity, I must now beg leave to take some farther notice of that celebrated custom. It may very justly be looked upon as the *twin-sister of infant baptism*. They came into the world together; and are certainly entitled to equal veneration; since, in point of importance and authority, as well as antiquity, they stand exactly on the same footing. The arguments in favour of the one are equally favourable to the other, and the objections to either evidently affect both*. It seems it was the doc-

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* A full proof of the above assertions may be seen in Mr. PEIRCE's *Essay in favour of the ancient practice of giving the Eucharist to children*: and Dr. PRIESTLEY's *Address to Protestant Dissenters on the subject of giving the Lord's Supper to Children*.

Here it may not be amiss to lay before the reader a sketch of what those eminent writers have advanced on the subject of *Infant communion*.—After having traced that custom up to the days of Austin, and even to those of Cyprian, who lived in the third Century, they pro-

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for see (a) p-111.

trine of *transubstantiation* that supplanted this practice in the Western or Romish church, after it had stood its ground several hundred years. It is still practised in the Greek, Russian, Armenian, Maronite, Coptic, and, if I mistake not, all the Eastern churches. The Reformed churches reject it for reasons that ought to make them blush at their conduct in retaining infant sprinkling.

It has been maintained by some, that it was the misapprehension of our Lord's words John iii. 5. and vi. 53, 54. (taking the former to refer to baptism and the latter

to shew that the origin of it is of still more ancient date. From certain notions entertained by *Irenæus*, *Justin* and *Ignatius*, concerning the Lord's Supper, they conclude that infant communion was practised in the *second Century*, and that those Fathers approved of it. They own indeed, that there is *no express mention* made of this practice *before the third Century*; but then they urge that neither is any thing mentioned before that age, from which it may be inferred that it was not then used; and also that there is *no express mention of infant baptism*, any more than infant communion *before the third Century*. Now since infant communion appears to have been the constant practice at so very early a period, and continued without variation, for many Centuries, in ages abounding with writers, and full of controversy, they think it very improbable that it was not in use even in the time of the Apostles; and that we should not have been able to trace the rise and progress of it, if it had been introduced after their time: especially considering how much easier it is to do this with respect to a *practice*, than with respect to an *opinion*. Upon the whole, they look upon the silence of remote antiquity as a strong argument in favour of the universal prevalence of infant communion. Mr. *Peirce* does not however, expect this argument should be of any force but only with those who believe that infants ought to be baptized, and were so in the most primitive ages of the christian church. 'As to the *Antipedobaptists*,' says he, I own this argument is of no strength at all; they will be able easily enough to answer it according to their principles. 'But I desire all that are of the same persuasion with myself, concerning the ancient practice of baptizing infants, to consider seriously, how they can account for it, that there should be nothing found in the writings of the ancients like to the style and language of the moderns, if the custom

latter to the Lord's supper, and supposing them to imply, that without partaking of those ordinances, all men, even new born infants, are excluded from salvation:) that gave rise to infant baptism and infant communion; but that seems to me to be a mistake. The ancient corruptions of Christianity were all adopted in imitation of something or other

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custom of both as to infant communion were the same. How common is the distinction among us of adult and infant communion? Why is no such distinction, or any thing tantamount, to be met with in the ancients except it be, that there was with them no difference between these two, but the communion of the adult and infant was the same?

Though our learned authors do not pretend that there is much said concerning infant communion by the Apostles and other writers of the New Testament, or even that they do *expressly* mention it, there having been no controversy about it to give them an opportunity so to do, yet they affirm that there are not wanting circumstances, which shew that they *had a view to it* in their writings, and which ful'y prove the lawfulness of it. Here Mr. Peirce urges as his *First Argument*, that 'the baptism and communion of infants stand upon the same foot, and therefore they who admit the one ought to admit the other also.' For the confirmation of this, he proceeds to shew, 1st. *That the same reasons which are brought for infant baptism are in like manner applicable to infant communion.* And 2dly. *That the objections against infant communion will admit of the same answers as those against infant baptism.* To evince the *first* of these, he observes 1st. That one strong argument for infant baptism is taken from 1. Cor. vii. 14. *The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, &c. Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* And he adds, that much stress has been laid upon this in the controversy about infant baptism, but not more, he thinks, than the text will bear. 'But I desire only a reason,' says he, 'why this will not as well prove infants right to the eucharist as to baptism.' The holiness the Apostle attributes to these children, stands, he says, in opposition to uncleanness; and so is to be explained from the ceremonial law; according to which, persons were *unclean* when they were debarred the public worship and communion of the people of God, and were reckoned *holy* when they were fit and qualified for the service of God, and a communion with his people, &c. The Apostle, he asserts, must be understood to say, the *Children*

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Judaism or Heathenism; and were the offspring of that accommodating principle which always accompanies the love of the world. This was evidently the case

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of Christians were *not unclean but holy*, that they were not as unclean persons under the law, debarred the public service, or communion with the church of God; but were reckoned by God fit for it. 'And in the same manner,' says he, 'as this warrants their baptism, it will their communion also.' He urges 2. That infants right to the Lord's Supper may, as well as their right to baptism, be pleaded from their being *members of the visible church*. And, 3. That their right to the one ordinance as well as the other, may be pleaded from their having an interest in the New Covenant; and the Lord's Supper being a *Seal* of that covenant as well as baptism. And 4. That the charge of *harsh and injurious treatment*, sometimes brought against the Anti-pædobaptists for not baptizing their infants, is equally applicable to the case of those who do not bring them to the Lord's table. 5. That the plea in favour of baptizing infants---That they are *capable of salvation*, is no less favourable to the practice of infant communion. 6. That another plea for baptizing infants, from the necessity of *devoting them to God*, may likewise be made with as much propriety in behalf of infant communion. He then, 7. Considers that text so often cited in support of infant baptism, Luke xviii, 15, 16, *They brought unto him also infants, that he should touch them: &c.*---'Hence,' he observes, 'it has been argued that Christ is willing little Children should come to him, and he is pleased when infants, who are not able to come themselves, are brought by others to him, that he may bless them. And who has been able to assure those who make use of this argument, that Christ is only willing to have them brought to him in baptism, and not in the Lord's Supper? Is not giving them the Eucharist as solemn a way of bringing them to Christ as baptizing them? What reason can there be that the faith of parents should not be as available in bringing them to the Lord's Supper as to baptism?' 8. He observes that the argument in defence of baptizing infants, from the notion of their being *disciples*, founded on Act. xv. 20. is capable of being urged no less effectually in defence of infant communion. 9. That whereas it is pleaded that infant baptism has been practised from the commencement of Christianity, the same may with equal truth be alleged in behalf of infant communion. The parallel, he observes, might be easily run a great deal farther, but this, he hopes, will be deemed sufficient to justify the *first part* of his assertion.---He then proceeds to make good the *second part* of his assertion, viz. That *the objections against infant communion will admit of the same answers*

case with the customs now under consideration. They came in under the patronage of the world, and in conformity to its religious systems, which comprehended infants

as those against infant baptism. 'The only objections,' he observes, 'which carry any appearance of weight in them, are taken from their incapacity to perform some acts which are required in the adult communicants, such as *remembering Christ, discerning his body*, and previously *examining themselves*. And just such arguments may be, and are alleged against infant baptism---Infants are not capable of that *repentance and faith*, which are required in the adult when they are baptized. And the same kind of answer will serve in both cases: They may not be capable of *all* the ends of the one or the other institution, but they are of *some*, and those such as are a sufficient reason for their being admitted to either of these sacraments.' (See Peirce's *Essay*, p. 76. ---82.) Our learned author, afterwards (p. 147. &c.) takes a more particular view of the objections against infant communion, to each of which he gives a separate answer.---Here he observes, 1. That 'tis objected, that infants are incapable of *remembering Christ*, which he expressly requires his disciples to do in partaking of the Lord's Supper. To which he replies (1) that such kind of objections will as soon overthrow infants right to *baptism* as to the Lord's Supper. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved* (Mark 16. 16.) *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized.* (Acts 8. 37.) And many other such texts may as well be urged to shew the necessity of *repentance and faith* before baptism; of which yet infants are as incapable as they are of *remembering Christ*. (2) The same argument might as well have been urged against infants eating of the *passover*, since it was as much the design of that feast to keep up the remembrance of the deliverance out of Egypt, as it is the design of the Lord's Supper to keep up the remembrance of our redemption by Christ. Nor was it the *passover* alone that was designed among the Jews for a *remembrance* (as Deut. xvi, 3.) but the *feast of Weeks* also had the same object in view. (Deut. xvi, 12.) The latter likewise, as well as *that of Tabernacles* was to be held with *rejoicing*, (Deut. xvi, 11, 14.) which was, indeed, the case in general with all their feasts upon their sacrifices. (Deut. xii, 7.) But infants are as incapable of *these* as they are of *remembering Christ*, yet *that did not exclude them* from those feasts. After making several other observations on this head, he proceeds to another objection; which is, 2ly. *Children are not capable of performing the duty of SELF EXAMINATION*, which is prescribed as previously necessary to a person's receiving the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. xi, 28. To which he answers, 'The pedo-baptist

infants among the members of their respective communities. Both Heathenism and Judaism may be said to have espoused their cause, and to have exerted their influence

baptists must own that the texts I mentioned before may be as strongly urged against infant baptism as this can against infant communion. Nay, I don't see (he adds) but by the same rule we may exclude children from all the parts of worship.' A little after he says, he thinks it a strong as well as fair answer to this objection, that the command *Let a man examine himself &c.* is to be understood as not to exclude such as are by their age incapable of examining themselves, from partaking: But only to oblige all that are capable---As that like command, *If any will not work neither shall he eat*, must be so limited to such as are able to work. After alleging much more to the same purpose, he lays down another objection; viz. 3ly. *Children ought not to receive the Lord's Supper, because they are not able to DISCERN THE LORD'S BODY, as communicants ought to do*, according to 1 Cor. xi, 29. Against this he urges in part, that he 'might here answer as before, that this concerns the adult, and requires that such as are capable of doing it should discern the Lord's body when they partake of his supper. And the reader may here apply the instances which have been already alledged [viz. in the Essay] to shew the reasonableness of allowing such kind of interpretations.' He afterwards states and answers several other objections, such as, 'Infants are not proper subjects of the Lord's Supper because they cannot shew forth the Lord's Death, &c. &c.'

To his *first* argument, as above stated (viz. 'The baptism and communion of infants stand upon the same foot, and therefore, they who admit the one ought to admit the other also.') Our ingenious author adds *nine* more; one of which is the following---'I argue the right of infants to partake of the sacraments of the New Testament, and consequently of the Lord's Supper, from the right they had to partake of the sacraments of the old Testament.'---All the rest are very worthy the serious consideration of those paedobaptists who reject infant communion.---He closes his elaborate performance by pleading upon various considerations, the *vast UTILITY* of his favourite practice.---1. 'It may be reckoned no small advantage in this case, that we shall become more *consistent with ourselves* in maintaining infants church membership and right to baptism. The *antipædobaptists* hardly say any thing more plausible on this head, than when they argue from our own proceedings, and ask us, why we don't administer the Lord's Supper to infants as well as baptism?'---2. 'The reviving this ancient practice, will probably, *ease* abundance of honest, pious souls of many perplexing

influence to get them admitted and established among Christians; and the conciliating temper of the good fathers of the *third* century, in whose days they were introduced, had prepared them to receive any thing that should come thus recommended. As to the inspired records of Christianity it is very certain that they could have no hand at all in this business, since the customs in question contradict the very spirit of those records

perplexing fears and scruples about this sacrament.---3. Our communions would then be much fuller than they are: For besides the addition of the young communicants, if the adult were freed from their discouragements, they would be made free to come, and we should not so often miss their company.---4. This would go a great way toward removing an inveterate evil custom of having the Lord's Supper so rarely administered, and restoring the ancient practice of christians attending it every Lord's day.---5. It will be a means of making good impressions upon children in their early days.---6. It will bring young persons more under discipline, and give the rulers of the church a greater advantage for dealing with them.---7. It will give the governors of the church a greater advantage for dealing with parents about the education of their children. They will find a necessity of concerning themselves in this important affair when their children are brought up from their infancy in the full communion of the church.---8. It will make parents and masters more careful about the education of children, &c. when they find both they and their children will otherwise incur an ecclesiastical censure.---9. It may be a means of reviving a more orderly discipline in the church. The decay of discipline is universally owned and lamented: But we seem to be at a loss how to revive it, and where we should begin.---He says afterwards that he can't think what more advantageous opportunity we can have to make a beginning than by restoring infant communion---He adds in the 10th. and *last* place, 'I am apt to think the attempting to restore this practice, might be a means of healing our divisions, and lessening parties among us.'---

This short abridgement of part of *Mr. Peirce's Essay* will shew such of my candid readers as are unacquainted with that performance on what ground he fixes the doctrine of infant communion. *Dr. Priestley's* reasons are much to the same purpose; some of them indeed, I have laid down in the former part of the note---His Address may be considered as an abridgement of the *Essay*.---The above Note, I doubt not, is quite sufficient to convince any impartial and serious man that *infant baptism and infant communion ought to stand or fall together*.

cords. The Christian dispensation was peculiarly designed for *adults*. Such of them as appear to understand and believe the gospel are to be admitted into Christ's church; and such alone are the people who have a right to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. This appears from the plain import of the apostles doctrine, and is confirmed by the whole course of their ministry. And that this should be the case under the Gospel, was plainly foretold in the Old Testament Prophecies. It had been there expressly declared that the people of the New Covenant, or the subjects of the Gospel kingdom, should have the Law of God *written in their hearts*; and that they *should ALL know the Lord, from the LEAST of them unto the greatest of them.* (Jer. xxxi. 31. 34.) This prophecy, Sir, and the currency of the New Testament revelation are absolutely repugnant to the notions of infant baptism and infant communion. But so were not the Pagan and Jewish systems. They indeed, as I before intimated, *did not* exclude infants from their sacred rites. Infants as well as their parents were admitted into the solemnities of the *heathen* temples, and partook of the feasts made there in honour of idols. And as to the *Jewish* infants, it is well known that they were admitted into the church and did actually partake along with their parents of the ordinances and privileges of it: It follows then, that Judaism and Heathenism agreed with each other in this particular, and widely differed from Christianity. And there is the greatest reason to believe that it was this difference, together with the prejudice it occasioned, that induced the ancient Fathers to adopt infant baptism and infant communion. This fatal *complaisance* was their ruling principle, their constitutional sin, and the source of all the religious innovations they introduced.

introduced. Though it might procure them, as it doubtless did, the esteem of the world, and perhaps the reputation of being men of great *candour, moderation and politeness*, yet in the estimation of the New Testament, it certainly ranks them in that odious class, which is distinguished by the very expressive names of *earthly minded men*, and *enemies of the cross of Christ*.

As to the passages in John iii, 5 and vi, 53, 54. It does not appear to me that the misinterpretation of them gave rise to infant baptism and infant communion, but rather that those practices gave rise to that misinterpretation, and caused those passages misinterpreted to be immediately pressed into their service. The religion of the World, either Jewish or Pagan, as I observed before, appears to have been always the model and guide of the ancient perverters of the truth. — Had neither Paganism nor Judaism admitted infants to their religious ordinances it is more than probable that we should never have heard either of infant baptism or infant communion. But it is an indisputable fact that both those systems included infants among the partakers of their religious ordinances; which made the ancient Fathers desirous that their system should do so too: By degrees they came to a resolution, at all events, to new-model Christianity, so as to make the way to its ordinances open to infants as well as adults. The *African doctors* took the lead in this notable business: Most of the Christians of the *West*, except those who were afterward distinguished by the names of *Waldenses, Albigenses, &c.* readily fell in with the measure; but it seems to have been a good while before the *Eastern* churches followed their example. They however, thought proper to do so

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at last ; and both infant baptism and infant communion have been continued among them ever since. The accommodating spirit, inseparable, in a professor of Christianity, from the love of the World, was what gave rise to these usages. But when they were introduced, they led, or however encouraged their votaries to fix upon the forementioned explication of our Saviour's words to countenance them. And, what is certainly somewhat remarkable and curious, those words of our Lord were the *principal texts* that could be thought of for sometime, as proper to urge in their favour. How vastly ate the times altered since ! What heaps of texts the modern advocates for these customs are able to quote in support of them, which the ancients could never think of; while those which the latter thought the most favourable to their cause, are now deemed little, or nothing at all to the purpose ! Whatever others may think of this circumstance, I must confess that I cannot help looking upon it as rather unfavourable to the cause of the usages in question ; for had they been really commanded in scripture, one cannot conceive why the ancients should not have been as well acquainted with those commands as the moderns ; especially, as they must have been equally interested, and, in all probability, took no less pains to find them out. But by viewing both the customs as *corruptions of christianity*, the circumstance, at once ceases to be mysterious ; as it is well known that the ordinances of antichrist are capable of *improvement*, which is by no means the case with those of Jesus Christ.

You allow, indeed (with what *consistency* the impartial must judge) that infant communion is a corruption of

of Christianity——because there is no mention made of it before the *third century*, and that mention is made only by *Cyprian*; on which account you call it the *Cyprianic Innovation*: (Rev. Rev. p. 105.) But, Sir, it was in the *very same century* that infant baptism itself was *first* mentioned. *Tertullian*, who flourished about the beginning of that century, is the first who expressly mentions infant baptism, and that is only by way of **DISAPPROBATION**. Nor will the mention he makes of it prove that it was ever *practised* in his time; it only amounts to a proof that the question about it was then agitated. He mentions no instance of *an infant baptized* as *Cyprian* does of one receiving the *Lords Supper*. *Origen* (who lived but a few years before *Cyprian*, if he was not his cotemporary) is the first who is pretended to have spoken expressly in favour of infant baptism. But it is surely very uncertain, whether the passages ascribed to him, and upon which this opinion is founded, be really his, as they are taken from the *latin translation* of his works, which all the learned allow to be a most shamefully interpolated and mangled performance; so that one cannot be sure in reading it, whether he is reading *Origen* or his translator. Even ‘*Ruffinus* himself owns, not only that he used great freedom in translating the *homilies* on *Leviticus*, and *added much of his own to them*; but also in his translation of the commentary on the *Romans*, he grants the charge against him—that *he added some things, supplied what was wanting, and shortened what were long*: and it is from these two pieces that the two principal passages which assert infant baptism to be the custom of the church, and an apostolical tradition are taken.*

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But *Jerome*, you say, *agrees* with *Ruffinus* in giving the sense of *Origen* concerning the point in question.—And *Jerome* was *his bitter enemy*. Is it then my good Sir, an *impossible*, or even a very *rare* matter for *bitter enemies* to agree in *mischief* upon suitable or convenient occasions? The memorable coalition between *Herod and Pontius Pilate* of old, and that between *Fox and North*, in our own time, are flagrant proofs that such an agreement is *by no means impossible*: And could we come at the knowledge of all the similar instances, from the days of *Herod* to those of *Fox*, I make no doubt but we should find their number vastly great. As to *Jerome* and *Ruffinus*, their being both *Pædobaptists* was a sufficient inducement for them to *agree* in making *Origen* plead for infant baptism. The former does not appear to have been at all an *honester* person than the latter; nor is *his translation*, as a very good judge † declares, any thing more exact than his.—*St. Jerome* (lays the most learned *Joseph Mede*) is a man of no faith with me, when he describes the opinion of his adversary; which, whatsoever it were, he would set it forth as odiously as possible could be. He was a man that cared not what he said so it might disparage his adversary. * What could be expected, Sir, from such a man as this, but that he would sacrifice truth and honesty, whenever they happened to stand in competition with his prejudice or his passion?—And being a *Pædobaptist* himself, it is no kind of wonder that his *translation* of *Origen* should countenance infant baptism, even though there had not been one word said about it in the original. It is indeed rather a wonder that his latin version of the New Testament, which he executed at the desire of his turbulent friend *Pope Damasus*,

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† Dr. Gill, as before, p. 29. * *Mede's Works*, p. 1025. See also p. 748.

is not much more erroneous than it is. In short, Sir, *Jerome* is well known to have been an ambitious, overbearing, foulmouthing and intolerant man: so that it was, to be sure, misfortune enough for *Ruffinus*, as *Massheim** intimates, to have him for his adversary; especially (to borrow Dr. *Fortin*'s words) 'as he had the *wrong-headed*, that is to say, a vast majority on his side.' † The latin translation of *Origen*, whether done by *Ruffinus* or *Jerome* is of too infamous a character to be admitted an evidence of *Origen*'s sentiments upon any subject whatsoever. Had you not been grievously pinched for want of proof, you would, surely, never have thought of bringing that translation forward for that purpose: for a testimony from thence is to the full as inadmissible in this dispute, as that of a person convicted of falsity and perjury would be in any court of judicature. The displeasure you discover at my questioning the authenticity of that scandalous performance, I cannot but consider as an indication (to say the least of it) of a very ungenerous spirit. But why do you not produce a proof *out of Origen's Greek works*, that he was a *pædobaptist*? Is it not because they contain no such proof? Dr. *Gill* has produced two passages from those works which speak directly for believers baptism, and even so as to *exclude* that of *infants*; † which one could not have expected had the passages you have cited in favour of infant baptism been *his own*. The same author observes § that no writer before or after *Origen*, till the times of *Jerome* and *Ruffinus*, ever spoke of infant baptism as the *usage of the Church*, or an *apostolical tradition*: Nor did even *Cyprian*, who came after him,

* *Eccl. Hist.* vol. 1. p 295. † *Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* vol. 2. p. 105. † *Antipædobaptism*, p. 28. 29. § *Ibid* p. 27.

him, and pleaded for it, ever quote *Origen* as saying this: Nor does *Austin*, who long after pleaded for the practice as apostolic, ever appeal to *Origen's testimony of it*. All this, Sir, makes strongly against the genuineness of the passages you contend for. — It will likewise shew the great difference between the language of *Origen's age and that of Jerome's*, with respect to infant baptism; and justify my observation in my last tract (p. 63.) That the passages you had quoted bear a much greater resemblance to the writings of the latter part of the fourth century, than to those of above an hundred years before, when *Origen* lived.

Now, Sir, I insist, that you cannot upon any principle of right reason, or even of decency, demand the admission of the passages in question, as proofs of *Origen's* being a *Pædobaptist* — And, moreover, that it remains still unproved that any one of the writers you mention before *Cyprian* may be called by that name. I own, indeed, that it is in no small degree surprising, that a practice so very agreeable to the genius of both Heathenism and Judaism, or, in other words, to the fashion and spirit of the world, as infant baptism evidently is, should not have been introduced long before the third Century. That, however, seems plainly to have been the period that gave it birth; and *Cyprian* is the first that can be named as its patron. He is also the first that we know as the patron of infant communion. But he was not the only man, nor was the church of *Carthage* the only church of that time, that favoured these customs. The 64th. Epistle of *Cyprian*, as Mr. *Pearce* observes,* shews that they were both approved of

* *Essay, as before, p. 45.*

of and practised, by all the bishops that were in the same province with him—and they appear to have gone along, hand in hand, from that period to the days of pope *Innocent* and *Austin*, and even to this day, except in these western parts, where *transubstantiation* some Centuries ago, cruelly supplanted infant-communion, and so deprived infant-baptism of a most worthy and desirable associate.

Before I conclude this letter I cannot help reminding you of your saying (Rev. Rev. p. 105.) that to assert, as I had done, that *infant communion*, giving the baptized *milk and honey &c.* have the same antiquity with infant baptism, is, you think, only fit for a man who expects from his readers a good deal of credit.'—Pray Sir, does not *Tertullian*, the very first who does so much as mention infant baptism (though, to the best of my recollection, not as practised in his time) mention also, *anointing the baptized, and giving them milk and honey*, and even the admission of *sponsors*, and making the *sign of the cross*, as all in use in his time? * And does not *Cyprian*, whose writings contain the first certain traces of the practice of infant baptism, speak of infant communion too, as then in vogue? † How then will you make it appear that what I had said on this head is only fit for one who expects from his readers unreasonable credit?—Leaving you to clear up this point at your leisure, I conclude,

and remain &c.

* Tert. de Bapt. l. 2. c. 18. and c. 7. and de Corona, c. 3.—
See also Steennett against Addington P. 2. p. 244. *sa*

† Cyp. de Lapsis. p. 175.

*Copy in my Paraphr. Vol: XLII, Addington's
on Baptism — LETTER*

LETTER V.

SIR,

WHEN the Jews saw the second temple, they wept—and what (says a very sensible writer *) would the primitive Christians say to that pompous Edifice which has been built upon the ruins of Christianity, and has been receiving constant alterations, till scarce a single stone of the original structure is left? And what (I will add) would they say to that idle, absurd ceremony, *infant sprinkling*, in particular, which is substituted in the room of the gospel ordinance of *baptism*; and yet has no more likeness to it than the Koran has to the *Bible*, or the *Legend* of saint Francis to one of the *Four Gospels*?

The scripture account of baptism appears to me so very plain and full, (as I told you in the course of my former correspondence §) that I cannot but think

* See a very judicious periodical work published in 1761 and 1762, entitled, 'The Library'—vol. 1. Introd. p. 11.

it strange that any one who has carefully attended to it should find any difficulty in answering that question — What does the New Testament mean by the action of baptizing? The original words which express this ordinance, seem to signify immersion as naturally and as determinately as the English words *dip*, *dipping*, &c. If they have been sometimes used in a somewhat improper sense, it is no more than what may be said of English words of the same import. It is not unusual in some places to say of a person who had been out in a hard shower of rain—‘He was finely *dipped*’—‘He was well *ducked*,’ and the like; yet nobody, I apprehend, will thence affirm of those words, as you do of Greek words of the same meaning, that they do *not* properly and necessarily signify *immersion*. It is, however, altogether as easy to prove that the English word *dip* signifies to *pour*, and *sprinkle*, as well as to *immerse*, as it is to prove that the Greek word *baptizo* does so:—Indeed the above-mentioned expressions, alone, would prove it, as clearly and absolutely as any thing that can be alleged in behalf of that Greek word. Had there been equal inducement, there is very little reason to doubt but we should hear it asserted, that the same latitude is to be given to the word *dip*, as you claim to the word *baptizo*.

Some have been inclined to think that, seeing *to dip* is the native meaning of that Greek word, had our translators used that and the corresponding expressions instead of *to baptize*, &c. † an end would have been put to this dispute, and

† Our translators, however, were not left at liberty to do so, (the King, under whose direction they acted, having expressly forbidden it) as may be seen by consulting Lewis’s Hist. of the English transla-
tions

and to the customs of sprinkling and pouring, in England; but, to me that does not seem at all very probable. The Dutch translators, it is well known, have turned the original words into such plain Dutch words as, *doopen, doop, dooper, &c.* which answer to the English words *dip, dipping, dipper, &c.* † *Iwaam van Canlisius*, they have rendered *Joannes de Dooper*, i. e. *John the Dipper*:—But yet *sprinkling* has maintained its ground in Holland ever since; and, what is very remarkable, the performer of the ceremony solemnly declares on the occasion, *not* that he *sprinkles*, but that he *DIPS* the person, *in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!* Had our translators, Sir, proceeded in the same manner, in this case, with those of Holland, the consequence, in all probability, would have been the very same. *Sprinklers*, I verily believe, would have abounded here, for all that, to this day, as they have done in the united Provinces. Nor do I think it at all unlikely that *you* would have been one of the number: and even one of the foremost, solemnly to pronounce at the *sprinkling* of an infant,

tions of the Bible.---*Baptism, Baptize, &c. &c.* were termed ecclesiastical words, and deemed sacred; and his Majesty ordered that they should, without fail, be used in the new version. The translators carefully obeyed the royal mandate; and, when they had done, boasted their having avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who left the old ecclesiastical words, and betook them to other, as when they put *washing* for *baptism*, &c. &c.---King James was not the first who objected to words of the above denomination being turned into plain English; Bishop Gardiner did the same in the reign of Harry viii. and managed his point so skilfully as to frustrate entirely the King's design, signified to the bishops and clergy in the convocation which met, Feb. 16. 1542. of having the translation of the New Testament revised.---Wickliff, who was happily a stranger to such restraints, rendered *Caricatio Mat iii, 6 weren waschen.*

† See Sewel's Dutch and English Dictionary.

(a) The Solopian Zealot, in my Pamph.
Vol.

infant, these words—I *dip* thee, in the Name of the Father, &c.—Now, however, without imagining and pleading, that to *dip* signifies to *pour*, or *sprinkle*, as well as to *immerse*; or, in other words, that it properly signifies in general *any washing as well as immersion*. You will, perhaps, stare at this; but really, I can see nothing more unnatural and absurd in it than in your present conduct of *sprinkling* infants in the name of the ever blessed Trinity, and calling it *christian baptism*; or, pleading that *baptizo*, signifies to *pour*, or *sprinkle* as well as to *dip*. If there be any words in the Greek language synonymous to the English word *dip*, *baptizo*, certainly must be one of them.

But you will, possibly, ask, why the inspired writers of the New Testament used the word *baptizo*, and not its primitive *bapto*, (a word which you seem to allow, necessarily signifies to *dip*) if they meant to convey the idea of immersion when they spoke of this ordinance. One reason for that, Sir, may be, because *baptizo* conveyed that idea, as clearly, and as exclusively as the other. But, possibly, the principal reason is, because ‘The phraseology of the New Testament is taken from the *SEPTUAGINT*, or Greek translation of the Old:’ and such words, and only such words, are used to express the action of *baptizing*, as there denote and specify, precisely, that particular precept of *bathing*, or covering the whole body in water; a rite perfectly distinct from, and never confounded with any other rite of *sprinkling*, *pouring*, &c. Now, *Cæsarius* as the ingenious author of the *Letters to Bishop Hoadly*, observes,

§ See Rev. Rev. p. 25.

• See Prideaux Connect. vol. 2. p. 47, edit. 4th. and Letters to Bp. Hoadly N°. 2, 4, 5. also Michaelis’s Lectures, sect. v. vi. vii.

(a) see p-71, (a)

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* See the Septuagint text, in the above places.

⁴⁴ see Month. Rev. Vol. LXX, p. 396.

is no word, whose literal, strict and proper meaning may not be evaded, whenever an *allusive* and *metaphorical* sense can be found. Its literal sense, even when there is no possible room for *figure*, may be thrown aside, and the *figurative* import brought in, whenever it is convenient to serve an *hypothesis*. And so I have known it actually fare with the offspring of *Barras*, viz. *Barrigω*, particularly in 1 Cor. x, 2. *And were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*—What every school-boy, capable of looking into his lexicon, knows to be the strict *literal* meaning of the word, is set aside, where it occurs only in its *literal* import, by the help of a few circumstances in a mere *figure* and *allusion*; thus the *cloud*, which hung over the children of *Israel* is a watery substance, *sprinkling* its water in *drops*. The *Sea*, which was *as a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left*; by the force of the strong wind which blew, sent forth a great spray or *sprinkling*. So they were plentifully *sprinkled* by the cloud above, and by the waters on each side.—But a man of plain sense, not thinking of this cloud or pillar of *fire*, dropping down *water*; but of opinion that the baptism of Scripture is *immersion*, would be apt to carry his thoughts no farther than to apprehend, here is an *allusion* to the custom of *immersion*; the *Israelites* being as it were *covered* by the cloud *over*, and the waters on *each side* of them. Or as *Grotius*, on the place, expresses it—“The cloud was over their “heads: so also is the water over the heads of those “who are baptized. The sea encompassed their sides; “so also does the water encompass those who are “baptized.”†

I beg

† See Letters to Bp. Morley No. 2 and 4.

I beg leave, Sir, to propose it to your consideration and that of your brethren,—‘Whether it is possible, agreeably to the language of the old Testament, to chuse out words that shall, more precisely, and strongly, convey the idea of *immersion*, than what the Evangelists and Apostles have actually chosen when they speak of baptism?—Could any one have helped them to apter and more determinate language, on *supposition* that they wanted, and designed to express to their countrymen that familiar and frequent practice among them of washing the whole body?—If the Spirit which inspired the Apostles, had given them a foresight of the controversies which have arisen on this head, could they have fixed on words better adapted to prevent such controversies? to prevent its being ever said—“ The language of the New Testament concerning “ this duty is so indeterminate and lax, that it matters “ not, whether, in baptism, you cover the whole body, “ or apply a little water to a part of it.”—‘It is easy for a reader, though of good understanding, to lose himself amidst clouds and darkness, if he knows nothing of the learned languages, when the books he reads draw him to the perusal of disputes about the sense and meaning of an *unknown tongue*.—But as this affair turns upon one short plain question, so every man of common sense can observe, whether a person of candour, and allowed to be a capable judge, will give his answer *yea*, or *nay*.—The short plain question is this—Is there ground and reason to conclude, the writers of the New Testament would have used *other expressions* if they had intended that one rite of *immersion*? If so, what are those *other expressions*?—This is bringing the matter to a short and plain issue. I believe

I believe, Sir, the most exact and rigorous examination of the foregoing queries will end in this conclusion: That by the baptism of water, the *New Testament* means, precisely and only, *immersion* in water. So that the learned *Selden*, who lived a little after immersion grew out of use, had too much reason to say, “In *England* of late years, I ever thought, the Parson *baptized his own fingers*, rather than the *Child*.” ‡— If these things are so; then there is another consideration deserving your attention; namely, what reply shall you make to the *Papists*? Who insist upon it, they do not *more* change and innovate in the administration of the *Lord’s supper*, by with-holding the *Cup* from the *Laity*, than you do in the administration of *baptism*, by setting aside *immersion*, and substituting *sprinkling* or *pouring* in its place. You would, perhaps, call theirs a *half communion*; because they with-hold the wine. What if they call yours, on the same ground, a *half baptism*? How shall you reply? I doubt the *Papists* will ever remain unanswered by you, until you confess *immersion* the only *baptism*; and that it cannot be proved, the church of *Rome* has more departed from the Christian rule, in their manner of administering the *Lord’s supper*, than you have in your manner of administering *baptism*.— While you hold your present principles, a sensible Roman Catholic, who knows his strength, or rather *your weakness*, will always retort upon you, “Shew us your authority for laying aside the primitive and scriptural *immersion*; and we will produce our authority for with-holding the *Cup* from the *Laity*. ”*

‡ *Selden’s Works*, vol. vi. Col. 2008.

* See Letters to Bp. *Hoadly*, No. V.

That the proper meaning of the word *Baptizo* is to *dip* or *immerse* is strongly corroborated by the leading circumstances mentioned by the inspired writers of the New Testament in relation to the administration of baptism. This sacred rite was first performed in *Jordan*, the largest river in the whole country—a plain indication that it was immersion, and *not sprinkling*, which needed no river, nor any large collection of water for the performance of it.—John also (we are told *) baptised in *Enon*; and the Holy Ghost gives as the reason why he chose that place, ‘Because there was much water there:’ which clearly suggests that he immersed or *dipped* the people. Surely a place of much water could not have been any way necessary in order to perform the rite of *sprinkling* a few drops on each of the converts.—*Philip and the Eunuch* went down both **INTO the water** || (not **TO** or **UNTO** the water, for that had been mentioned just before) Now what good reason can be assigned for their going down both *into the water*, but that it was in order that *Philip* might *baptize*, that is *dip* the *Eunuch* there? It could not, surely, be, that he might *sprinkle* a few drops of water on his face!—*Sprinklers* make the Scripture talk very impertinently, almost whenever it happens to mention the administration of baptism.—The baptizer and baptized are also represented as coming up *out of* the water; which plainly shews that they had been *in* the water; and for what purpose could that have been, but in order to perform the rite of immersion? It is certain, it could not have been at all necessary for the purpose of either *sprinkling* or *pouring*.—The

baptized

John iii, 23. || Acts viii, 38.

baptized are likewise said to have been *buried* and *risen, in baptism**. This also well agrees with the rite of immersion: but what agreement can it possibly have with that of aspersion, in performing which there does not appear the remotest resemblance to a resurrection or a burial?—Baptism is, moreover, represented as a *washing*;† which well agrees with immersion, but by no means with sprinkling, for that, as I have observed before, in the words of a favourite author, the scripture never considers as any washing at all, but a rite entirely distinct from every kind of lotion.‡ If you be not yet satisfied that sprinkling is no washing, ask your maid-servant whether sprinkling your linen be the same thing with *washing* it. †

I might here farther observe, that the *sufferings of Christ* are called *a baptism*, agreeably, no doubt, with the ideas of the Psalmist, who describes his sufferings by such metaphors as represent him come *into deep waters*, where the *floods overwhelmed him*.|| Immersion, or a being *overwhelmed*, must be very expressive of the stupendous sufferings of our Lord; but what analogy can sprinkling a small quantity of water on a person's face, bear to these sufferings? Certainly not the least in the world.—The abundant and extraordinary *donation of the Spirit*, is likewise called *a baptism*: Hence, referring to the approaching Pentecost, our Lord says to his disciples, ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence: ¶ And with a view to the same object, John the baptist tells the people, that our Lord should *baptize* with the *Holy Ghost* and

with fire.

* Col. ii, 12. See also Rom. vi, 4. † Acts xxii, 16.

‡ See Letters to Bp. Hoadly No, 3. || See Turners remarks on Lake's Sermon, p, 29, ¶ Psal, 69, 2, ¶ Acts, i, 5;

with fire.* The meaning of these passages, and their reference to immersion, will appear from Acts ii. 1, 2, 3.

—When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place: And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. The situation of the disciples after the house was filled, as is here described, did more than resemble immersion. Indeed it may be truly said that they were actually *immersed*. ‘Βαπτίζειν (says the learned Casaubon, on these passages) is to immerse, so as to tinge or dip; and in this sense the Apostles are truly said to be *baptized*, for the house in which this was done, was filled with the Holy Ghost, so that the Apostles seemed to be plunged into it, as into a fish-pool.’† That which resembled a rushing mighty wind, being intermixed with the divided flames, or cloven tongues like as of fire, gave this donation of the Spirit, the denomination of a fiery baptism, or a baptism with, or *in* § fire, as well as with, or *in* § the Holy Ghost.—The agreement between the passage of the Israelites through the Sea and immersion, has been noticed before; so that I need not enter upon the consideration of it here.

Now, Sir, all the above circumstances have a very natural and obvious reference to *immersion*; but cannot be said to have any at all to *sprinkling*. Nay, the very attempt to reconcile them to that practice, must be

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* Mat. iii, 11, + See Gill's Antient mode of baptizing &c, p, 92, 23.

§ EN πνευματι αγιω και πυρι

a burlesque upon the language and reasoning of scripture. Infidels would have but little room to ridicule the Bible, if Pædobaptists, and others of its pretended friends, had not previously rendered it ridiculous, by abusing it, or perverting its plain meaning, to serve their own purposes.—To suppose that the scripture by the word *baptize* means to *sprinkle*, must unavoidably exhibit the Apostles and Evangelists as a parcel of very weak and stupid people.—So far from being subjects of a divine inspiration, they must really appear destitute, even of *common sense* ;—especially when they are represented as telling us, that *John sprinkled the people in Enon, because there was MUCH WATER there*—That for the convenience of *sprinkling* he chose the *great river Jordan*—That *Philip went down with the Eunuch into the water*, that he might have a convenient opportunity to *sprinkle* a few drops of water on his face: and moreover,—That the overwhelming *sufferings of Christ* bear a striking resemblance to the *sprinkling a small quantity of water on a person*.

There is one consideration more that I would beg leave to offer in support of the above sense of the word *baptizω*; and that is, the meaning of the ancient *British* words that express the ordinance of baptism.—Now it is agreed on all hands that the Gospel was published in this Island at a very early period. And, though I pay no great regard to the various traditional tales of monkish, and other ecclesiastical writers, respecting that event; yet I cannot help thinking that the state of *South Britain*, as a *Roman Province*, must render it highly probable that it actually took place before the close of the first century. And

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if the Britons became acquainted with the Gospel in the *first* century (or even in the *second*) it will be of some consequence in this debate, to know the signification of the words they made use of to express the ordinance in question. — *Baptizo* (baptize) is, in the Cambro-british dialect, *bedyddio*; in the Cornu-british, *bedzidhi*, or *bidhyzi*.* and, in the Armoric, *badeza*; — *Bidhyzi* and *badeza*, in the two last mentioned dialects, always signified *plunging* or *dipping*; and so, certainly, did *bedyddio*, anciently, in the Cambro-british; though now-adays it is used only to express the Christian ordinance of baptism, together with what is vulgarly so called. — From *badeza* and *bidhyzi*, according to Dr. Borlase, is derived *bouffening*, in the Anglo-cornish dialect, which, likewise, means to *dip*, *plunge*, &c. † These facts, Sir, I think, make it very clear that the words used by the first Christians of this Island to express the action of baptizing were synonymous to our English words *dip*, *dipping*, &c. And consequently that *Baptizo* was in their time understood to be of the very same signification.

The opposition to the practice of immersion is, in a great measure grounded upon two objections — 1. That it is *indecent*; but this is mere pretence and cant: Immersion is certainly, in itself, no less decent than sprinkling; nor is it conducted, among the baptists, with less decency than the other rite is among the independents and other sprinklers. It must be surely very odd, that the wonderfully delicate patrons

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* See Lluyd's *Archæologia Britannica*.

† See Borlase's *Nat. Hist. of Cornwall*. — Also *Monthly Review*, vol. 19. p. 226.

of this objection should never find any fault with the Jewish batheings, and circumcision. — The other objection I referred to, is 2. That immersion is dangerous to health, especially in cold climates. But this contradicts the express declarations of the most eminent physicians, as well as universal experience. Is not immersion commonly practised throughout the vast Russian Empire, which comprehends some of the coldest climates in the world? And, is it not practised there too, in the coldest seasons of the Year, and that without any bad consequence at all to the health of the subjects? — In this country also (which, though not nearly as cold as Russia, is yet by no means a warm region) immersion has been practised in some of the severest winters ever known, and that in large rivers, after the ice had been with much difficulty broken and removed. All this I say has been done in our own Country, abundance of times, and always without any injury to the health of the baptized. Nay many tender and infirm people have declared that their health became much better after their immersion than it had been for a long time before. A remarkable instance of this kind occurred in this country some years ago, which I shall take the liberty to mention for the purpose of corroborating my position, *That immersion is NOT dangerous to health, even in cold climates, and in the coldest seasons of the year*; and also, to oblige some of my friends, who have particularly desired me to make it public. — The instance I have in view relates to a Mrs. Temple, who lived in the neighbourhood of North-Walsham — She had been convinced, by reading the New Testament, that the christian ordinance of baptism is, the immersion in water, in

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the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, of a person professing faith in the Son of God: And she purposed to act soon agreeably to that conviction; but, being shortly after seized with that dreadful, and commonly fatal disorder, the *cancer*, it was thought proper to defer it. During this illness, Mr. *Fairclath*, Surgeon, of North-Walsham, attended her for a considerable time; but, all his efforts proving fruitless, he at last pronounced her incurable. Upon this she sent for Mr. *Culley*, Minister of the baptist church at Worstead, where she usually attended when in health, and requested him to *baptize* her; declaring at the same time, that she depended not upon that ordinance for salvation, but relied alone upon the merits of Christ. Mr. C. told her that such a step, possibly, might be dangerous in her case; at least, though the Surgeon had given her over, yet that the enemies of baptism would not scruple to say that it was the cause of her death, &c. &c. * But as he could not satisfy her without it, he went to North-Walsham, and related the whole affair to the Surgeon: who advised him, by all means, to make haste and *baptize* her, because she had but a very short time to live.—‘And as she must

* The enemies of christian baptism, or immersion, are ever on the watch, to find out something that they may allege to its prejudice; and which may help them to fix a stigma upon all who are attached to it. The laws even of some protestant countries were once so hostile to this practice, as to make it a capital crime. And not longer ago than the last age a baptist minister was tried for his life in this country, at the instigation of certain devout infant sprinklers; because a woman whom he had *baptized* happened to die some weeks after. But, to the great mortification of those furious zealots, he was honourably acquitted; the *mother* of the deceased, among others, testifying upon oath that she was in better health, for several days after her baptism than she had been for some years before. See *Croby* vol. 1. p. 237, 238.

must soon die, (said he) whether she be immersed or not, none can reflect upon you; and I will take care to vindicate your character.' Upon his return she was carried to the river side, where they usually baptized; and after the ice was broke (for there had been a great frost for some time before) they went down both, into the water, and he immersed her, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. She was then carried home, and put in bed; where, after ordering the things to be taken away from her *breast* (that being the part where the disorder lay) and addressing the Deity in a short prayer, she composed herself to die.—But, to the great astonishment of all who knew her ease, she had no more pain in her *breast*, and [REDACTED] got perfectly well, in two or three days. This happened in the year 1724. The good woman continued well till the year 1727, when she died of the *small-pox*. Her Son, Abraham Temple, is still living at North-Walsham; upon whose testimony, and that of Mr. Trivett, an ancient worthy Minister, and parlor of the baptist church at Worstead, I publish this narration. (a)

But, to return to *sprinkling*—You will, perhaps, ask me, whence is that practice, if not from heaven? or, where did it originate? Such sprinkling, Sir, as that you contend for, I have already affirmed (p. 71.) originated in the ancient pagan temples. Neither the Patriarchs before the Law, nor the Jews afterwards, had any such practice as sprinkling *mere water*.—It is certainly a rite of *pure pagan* original.

As it was in the *third century* that the professors of christianity began, in contradiction to the original

(a) See Advertisement back of title page, & reference to M: R. Petty any notice was here introduced, in regard to this very immaterial part of this serious subject.

plan, to declare infants proper subjects of baptism and the Lord's supper; so also it appears that it was in the very same age that they began to lay aside *immersion*, and substitute *pouring* and *sprinkling* in its room. Of these two, *pouring* seems to have come first in vogue; but it was a good while before the validity of either was generally acknowledged.—That they were but newly introduced at the middle of the third century, may be inferred from the *doubts* expressed by some men of the first note, at that time, concerning their validity; as well as from the reasons urged on the other side in their favour. ‘You asked (says *Cyprian*, Ep. 69.)—Whether I thought those who receive the grace of God in sickness should be reckoned lawful christians, because *not washed in the water of salvation*, only *poured on*.—Let every one think as appears to him, and act as he thinks: We—judge the divine gifts can be defective to none—where there is full faith both in the giver and receiver,—If any think they gain nothing because *only poured on*,—let them not be deceived as if they should be baptized when they get well; but if they cannot be baptized, why are they to be thought christians, yet not equal to others?—The scripture says by *Ezekiel*, ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean;—And in *Numbers*, ‘The unclean person—shall be purified on the third and seventh day, and shall be clean.’—Again, The Lord said to *Moses*, ‘take the Levites—and thus shalt thou purify them, sprinkle them with the water of purification.’ Again, ‘The water of sprinkling is purification.’ Whence it appears that sprinkling of water has the same effect as the Laver of Salvation.’

—Docr

* See *Barker's Duty, Circumstances and Benefits of Baptism*, p. 107, 108.

—Does not all this, Sir, look somewhat like the first essays in defence of infant-baptism and infant-communion, grounded on John iii, 5, and vi, 53, &c? And, does not the vindicator look like one put to his shifts, and called to make his defence before he had time to consider what to say?—In truth, *Cyprian* seems justly entitled to the honour (if such it may be called) of being the *first* Patron of *pouring* and *sprinkling*, as well as of infant-baptism and infant-communion.—But there were at that time some men of the first rank who seriously objected to the validity of these substitutes of baptism.—*Cornelius* bishop of Rome, in a letter to *Fabius* of Antioch, about *Novatian*, says, ‘Falling into a severe distemper, and like to die, he received baptism on his bed, by *pouring*; if that can be called receiving it.’ Afterwards, speaking of *Novatian*’s being made a priest, by the favour of the bishop, he adds ‘though all the clergy, and many laity opposed it, as *not lawful* for one baptized by *pouring*, on his bed in sickness.’ *Dionysius of Alexandria* says ‘We justly dislike *Novatian*.—making void the holy laver, taking away faith and confession before it, and the Holy Ghost from it.’ † It appears by *Cyprian*’s words that immersion in his time was departed from, only in favour of the Sick.—These instead of being immersed, had water *poured on them*. This he vindicates from the example of *sprinklings*, among the Jews; which shews, as Mr. Barker observes, * that *all christians except the clinicks* were then *dipped*; otherwise he would have brought instances of christians so baptized, rather than have sought for it in antiquated Jewish ceremonies.

I am Sir, &c.
LETTER

† See *Eusebius Eccl. Hist.* B. vi. c. 42: & B. vii. c. 7.—Also Barker, as before, p. 210. * *Ib.* p. 222.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

YOUR zeal in support of such absurd notions as the *discipleship*, *new-birth*, and *internal holiness* of believers infants, † appears to me exceedingly strange and

† A *disciple of Christ*, is one who has learned, at least in some measure, the *doctrine* of Christ. But what part of his doctrine may a believers new born infant be said to have learned?—As to the *new birth*, it is the *change wrought* in a person by the *truth*—the beginning of a spiritual or holy life.—*Born again, of incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.* 1 Pet. 1. 23.—The *new creature*, then, is the man whom the Spirit of God hath formed a-new, by the *Gospel*. But an infant, who knows nothing of the *Gospel*, or its influence, cannot be said to be *born again*, or be denominated a *new creature*, in the scripture sense of those words.—And, as to *internal holiness*, or a *holiness of state and nature*, in the proper *gospel* sense, Is it not that godly disposition produced by the *truth*, and expressed in our *Lord's* petition to the *Father*, in behalf of his *disciples*—*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth?* John 17, 17.—What a horrible custom infant sprinkling must be, which sets its votaries upon corrupting such plain *doctrines* as these, and converting them into down-right absurdities!—Mr. C. (Rem. p. 48.) quotes John xi, 3, in proof that infants, if they have a place in the *Church of God* on earth or in heaven *must be born again*. He might, surely, as well have quoted Mark xvi, 16. ult. in proof that they *must also believe*.

and unseemly, when I consider that you profess yourself to be a *protestant*—and even, a *protestant dissenter*! Had you indeed been a *papist*, the circumstance would, at once, cease to be either wonderful or unbecoming. It might, perhaps, be sufficiently accounted for, and illustrated by a story that has been related by the late celebrated *Mr. Maclaurin*, professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh.—‘When that worthy gentleman was travelling in France, he accidentally fell into the company of a learned *Jesuit*, with whom he travelled several leagues; and, after some mathematical conversation, the *Jesuit* discovered, and most pathetically lamented *Mr. Maclaurin*’s heretical principles, and kindly offered his assistance to bring him into the true catholic faith, and, by solving all his difficulties, to introduce him into the pale of that church, out of which he could hope for no salvation. *Mr. Maclaurin* most cordially embraced his offer: in consequence, the discourse turned for some hours upon the doctrine of *transubstantiation*: after a full discussion of the subject, the *Jesuit*, eagerly embracing him, exclaimed, *My dear Mr. Maclaurin! You are the best, the truest friend that I ever met with! How happy am I in this blessed opportunity of your conversation! I shall never forget the obligation which I am under to you, above all men living!*—*Mr. Maclaurin*, startled at this, and beginning to flatter himself that he had turned the tables, and converted his converter, asked him wherein the obligation consisted? Why really, said he, you have made this same doctrine of *transubstantiation* appear so very *absurd*, and so very *ridiculous*, that for the future, I SHALL HAVE A WORLD OF MERIT IN BELIEVING IT.’

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Thus, Sir, you see that *the belief of absurdity* is not only quite consistent with *popery*, but even makes a very important *part* of it: But I still think it ought to make no part at all of your religion. The doctrines above-noted, however, for which you plead, are, in my opinion, nothing short of absurdities; and in that view, *ridicule*, perhaps, may be a better weapon to oppose them than *argument*; for absurdities may be laughed at, but cannot so well be reasoned against. *Ridicule* can never be so properly called *the test of truth*, as when the dispute lies between *truth* and *absurdity*. The latter, in all literary inquiries and debates, ought ever to be distinguished from simple falsity or error, as it always requires a different treatment. Certainly whatever contradicts common sense must be a very fit subject for Satire.

Having in my last letter treated of the *action* of baptizing, I proceed now to consider the question relating to the proper *subjects* of this ordinance. You imagine that the *infants* of believers are of that number: but I think, that baptism no more belongs to the *infants* of believers, as such, than to those of unbelievers; and that its *only* proper subjects, according to the New Testament, are those who appear to have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Baptism is not a deduction of reason but a plain *fact*, concerning which the acutest philosopher can know nothing more than any man of common sense. What the scripture testifies and declares concerning this fact, that is our rule, obvious to every attentive reader.—As in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, the fact is, that Christ gave the *cup* to the disciples as

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well as the *bread*; and therefore the Roman church *erreth*, in with-holding the cup from the people; and as it is an *error* to give the Lord's supper to *infants*, because they are incapable of *remembering* Christ and *examining* themselves, both which the scripture requires relative to that ordinance; so in the ordinance of baptism, it should seem, that because the fact, as it stands in the New Testament, is *immersion*, it is an *error* to throw that aside and put something else in the room of it; and because the fact, as it stands in the New Testament is, that men *believed*, and were baptized in *consequence* and *testimony* of such belief; therefore it is an *error* to throw aside the administration of baptism to *believers*, and apply and confine it to an age entirely incapable of any rational act.—After the strictest search into the nature and design of this positive institution, it appears to me there is no positive proof that it was designed for children. And if it be allowed there is no positive evidence, it is, I think, allowing there is *no proof at all*: for nothing of a positive and ritual nature can be proved a duty, or a command of God, merely by our own *reasoning*, and by arguments drawn from supposed *fitness*. If once we admit as *divine appointments*, practices grounded on our own notions of *fitness*, *expediency*, *usefulness*, &c. there is no knowing where to stop. At this rate a thousand ceremonies may be introduced into the church, though not one of them can stand the question, *Who hath required this at your hands?* Isai. i, 12.—You aim to prove a *positive command* by *inferences*: I think it necessary to look out for a *plain declaration*. By the force of inference, you set aside that maturity of age and *self-dedication* to true religion, to which all the

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New Testament history of baptism confines it; and universally (except in the case of proselytism) apply it to an age incapable of knowing the design of the solemnity, and of which the gospel is perfectly silent. — From examining the instructions of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, it appears to me, that the two positive institutions of the Gospel should go hand in hand, and be received about the same time; and none baptized, till like *Peter's* audience, they *gladly receive the word*, and are qualified for *christian fellowship*, and *breaking of bread*, *Acts ii, 41, 42.* (See Letters to Bp. Hoadly No. 10)

You see, Sir, that the invalidity of inferencial and analogical evidence, or indeed of any other, in this debate, short of *positive* evidence, is still an established principle with me. I have often wished to bring you, either to allow, or, at least to *attempt*, to confute this principle; but hitherto you have not cared to meddle with it. My ideas on this head were stated in my *first tract*; (p. 35.) and again in my *second*; (p. 44.) but you always carefully avoided taking any notice of them. You ought, surely, to have viewed them among the first things in my books that demanded your attention; seeing that *on them* the *stress* of a great part of my reasoning lay. But, perhaps, you thought them rather unmanageable; and prudently passed them by in silence. I must however, beg leave to lay them before you once more, somewhat enlarged. — 1. The receiving of baptism is not a duty of itself; or a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty made such to *christians* by the positive institution of *Jesus Christ*. — 2. All *positive duties*, or duties made such by *institution alone*, depend entirely upon the will and

and declaration of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real *design* and *end* of them; and, consequently, to the due *manner* of performing them.—3 It is plain therefore, that the *nature* the *design*, and the due *manner* of receiving *baptism*, must of necessity depend upon what *Jesus Christ*, who instituted it, hath declared about it.—4 It cannot be doubted that he himself sufficiently declared to his first and immediate followers, the whole of what he designed should be understood by it, or implied in it.

—5. The passages in the *New Testament*, which relate to this duty, and *they alone*, are the original accounts of the *nature* and *end* of this institution, and the only authentic declarations, upon which we can safely depend: so that neither the Abrahamic covenant, the law of circumcision, or any thing in the Mosaic ritual, nor yet the writings of the fathers, can be any rule to us in this case. (See Bp. Hoadly's Plain Account; and the Letters to him, as before, No. 1.)

Agreeably to these propositions, I plead, that infant baptism cannot be an ordinance of Christ, because he hath no where in the *New Testament* commanded it, or declared, in so many words, that it is his will that infants should be baptized. All my ideas of my Maker's Character lead me to expect that his precepts should be explicit; and that had it been his will that infants should be baptized, he would have declared it in the *New Testament*, as plainly at least, as he does in the *Old Testament* in the case of *circumcision*. But does the *New Testament* enjoin the baptism of infants as expressly as the *Old* did their circumcision? by no means:—So far from it, that the Law of baptism in the *New Testament* does not so much as mention infants, or drop a single hint that that ordinance belongs to them:

(a) in his Works Vol. 3. p. 843.
x p. 71. (a) Whereas

Whereas, the Law of circumcision in the Old Testament, expressly mentioned them, and declared their right to that usage in the clearest manner, and specified, even *the very day* of their age, on which it was to be performed.

Now, Sir, upon the supposition that infant baptism is founded in the New Testament, though *not expressly* commanded, or even so much as once *mentioned* there, it will follow that *Jesus Christ*, as a prophet and law-giver, is much *inferior to Moses*; or, in other words, that the *New Testament*, so far from being a more clear and perfect revelation than the *Old*, is, on the other hand, infinitely more obscure and imperfect; at least in that part of it that constitutes the law of baptism; which, in this case, must be deemed exceedingly dark and defective, indeed: while the law of circumcision, on the contrary, discovers a perspicuity and perfection, *worthy*, not only of a *wise human legislator*, but even *of God*.

Moreover, upon the Supposition that the New Testament requires infant baptism, in the manner you plead it does; that is, without an express declaration, or ever mentioning such a practice; it will follow, that the *deists* are quite right in denying the divine authority of the New Testament: for surely the book (if there be such a book) that requires a practice which is not a deduction of reason, or a duty apparent from the nature of things, and yet *never mentions it*, cannot have the infinitely good and wise *God* for its Author.

But the New Testament bears throughout, such indelible marks of divinity as are sufficient to convince any impartial man, that, had infant baptism been an ordinance of *Christ*, it would have been there *expressly declared*

declared to be such. And I am really amazed that any serious believer of the divine authority of the New Testament, can imagine that that book warrants the practice in question, seeing that both the law and the history of baptism there, are *totally silent about infants*. The *baptized* are constantly mentioned as professed *believers*; and they are mentioned as *men and women*; but *never as infants*:—And yet infants are frequently mentioned on other occasions; that is, doubtless, when it so happened that they made a part of the company.

The late worthy author of the Letters to bishop Hoadly, which I have so often mentioned, speaking of the account, in the eighth chapter of *Acts*, of the baptism of the Samaritan converts, observes, that nothing is to be found there but the baptism of professed *believers*. The history (he adds) is so particular and exact, as to mention *men and women*: but there it stops. Had the sacred historian been a little more explicit, in a matter wherein we *can know nothing* but from *plain declaration*, and are least of all left to our own reasonings; had he, I say, been a little more explicit, and said, *men, women, and CHILDREN*, if the fact were really so; it would have prevented much doubt and controversy. But as in this same chapter, when he relates *Saul's* committing *men and women* to prison, we naturally conclude, the persecutor's rage did not go so far as to imprison their *infants*; (at least there is nothing on which to rest a belief that he did) so from his stopping at *men and women* in his account of *baptism*, it seems he could go no farther, and says nothing of the baptism of their *infants*, because he *knew nothing of it*. — — — The writer of the *Acts* is careful to make express mention of *children* in an historical

historical fact of much less consequence, when children were really *part of the company*. Thus Acts xxi. 5. *They all brought us on our way, WITH WIVES AND CHILDREN, till we were out of the city.* We may observe in another instance or two, how carefully the scripture mentions *children*, when they were parties concerned. Matt. xiv. 26. *They that had eaten were five thousand men, beside WOMEN AND CHILDREN* [παιδιῶν, *little children.*] And in the next chapter, which records another miracle of the like sort, Matt. xv. 38. *They that did eat were four thousand men, BE-SIDE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.* [παιδιῶν, *little children; infants.*] — — — — These miracles of feeding so many thousand men from such scanty provision, would have been sufficiently great and illustrious, *without the additional circumstance of women and children;* but as they were parties concerned, they are mentioned.

— — — — Is it not exceedingly strange, Sir, that we should *no where* find *children* mentioned, *not ONCE* mentioned, if it were the apostles custom to baptize *them* with their parents? These servants and apostles of Christ were no strangers to baptism *before* the death of their master. They knew it, and practised it in *John's time.* But *to whom* did they *then* administer it? To the *adult only*: not to them *and their infants*; for *that is never said.* If afterwards they *were* to understand and practise this rite so *differently* from what they had *just before* understood and practised; if they *were* to baptize *not only* the professors of *repentance and faith*, but *their offspring too*; may we not expect to find such difference *expressed*, either in their Lord's commission, or in the authentic account of their *practice*, who baptiz'd in *obedience to his command?* — But if

if neither Christ nor his apostles have declared infant baptism, how shall we know it to be their mind? — In fine, I insist upon it, that the total silence of the *New Testament* relating to infant baptism is a plain and full proof that it is not an ordinance of *Christ*, but a mere *antichristian invention*. (See Letters to Bp. Hoadly, No. 7.)

Since the *New Testament* does not warrant, or so much as *mention* infant baptism, it cannot, I should imagine, be of very great signification *when*, or *by whom* it was first introduced among christians. The silence of the *New Testament* about it, is a sufficient proof that it is not a *New Testament* ordinance; and if it be not a *New Testament* ordinance, it is scarcely worth a christians while to bestow much labour upon the questions relating to the time, place, and other circumstances, of its *origin*. Some, however, have thought an inquiry about these matters, very proper and necessary. And as it has been supposed that the exact time of the origin of this practice is not easily ascertained, it has been thence inferred, that it certainly must be of apostolic extraction; seeing that had its origin been of later date, we should be able to discover that, in the writings of the fathers of the second or third age: But this inference, if admitted, would prove too much — It would prove that infant-communion, the sign of the cross and sponsors in baptism, anointing the baptized, and giving them milk and honey, and even the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, must be of apostolic extraction too; since the exact time, and other circumstances of their origin, are not more easily ascertained than those of infant baptism itself.

Dr.

Dr. Priestley, consistently, indeed, with his own avowed principles, allows the force of the above inference in favour of *infant-communion*, as well as of infant baptism. But, could he not see that it operates with equal effect in favour of numbers of other notions and usages, which he, at the same time, disapproves of, and rejects with disdain? — — — — Tis, surely, very unbecoming in such a man as Dr. Priestley, who so constantly, and so confidently assumes the character of a *free inquirer* after truth, to *trifle*, as he most shamefully does with the public, in his writings on this subject. — — — — Equally inconclusive and frivolous are his strictures on the power of the Master of a family (the *patria potestas*) in the East: — Whose character and profession, usually, it seems, very far affected his wife, his children, and his servants, and indeed every thing that belonged to him. ‘When the Ninivites (says he) repented, they made even their cattle to fast, and wear sackcloth, as well as themselves; not that they could consider their cattle as having any occasion to repent, but they did it in order to express, in a stronger manner, their own humility and contrition.’ (See Jonah iii. 7. 8.)

‘Agreeably to these prevailing ideas (he adds) though circumcision was a religious rite instituted as a symbol of the covenant between God and the descendants of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob, yet not only was Ishmael circumcised, but also all the slaves of Abraham, who had no interest whatever in the promises made to him. The application of this rite therefore to Ishmael, and to the slaves of Abraham, was no more than a necessary appendage to the circumcision of Abraham himself, as master of the family.’ According

to this, the instruction that God gave relating to Ishmael and the slaves, must have been quite unnecessary and superfluous, since they would have been of course circumcised, if he had not said one word about them.—It was altogether needless and redundant for him to say to the patriarch, *He that is born in thine house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised;* (Gen. xvii. 13) since that, it we may believe the doctor, would have unavoidably followed his own circumcision, though God had said nothing about it; or, to use his own words, *it was no more than the necessary appendage to the circumcision of Abraham himself as Master of the family.*

A little after, the doctor adds, ‘There can be no doubt but that when the Jews in future ages made converts to their religion, they obliged every Master of a family, both to submit to this rite himself, and likewise to see that *all* his household, or *all* that depended upon him did the same.’ ALL! surely not his wife, and the females of his family! yet, by the doctor’s rule, even *they* ought to have undergone some sort of circumcision (that of a finger or a toe at least) as well as the *males*.—He adds, in the same unlimited style, ‘For the same reason, whatever it had expressed, the same people would, no doubt, have applied it in the same *indiscriminate manner*, to the Master of the family, and to *all* his household.’ ‘It was natural therefore (he subjoins) for the Apostles, and other Jews, on the institution of baptism, to apply it to infants, as well as to adults, as a token of the profession of christianity by the Master of the family only.’—Was it indeed? But was it not *natural* too, for them to declare that they did so? Which yet they have

have never done. The doctor, in the very same paragraph, denies that baptism is a substitute for circumcision, because the scriptures NEVER SAY so. But if the silence of scripture be of force in the one case, why not in the other? — Such sort of reasoning, surely, will never recommend the doctor as an equitable writer; — It will rather shew the irresistible power of prejudice, or the baneful effect of an attachment to antichristian inventions, which is capable of making even doctor Priestley argue in the most inconsistent, superficial, inconclusive and disingenuous manner. (See Hist. Cor. Christ, vol. 2. Part VII.)

But, were the circumstances of *circumcision*, after all, owing to the particular customs of the country where that practice originated, or to the express direction of God? — Certainly to the latter. In like manner, the circumstances of *baptism* must entirely depend upon the particular instructions of the New Testament, and not upon the customs, or manners of different countries. — One would conclude from the doctor's representation, that the Gospel must be a very tractable and complaisant system indeed; and that its ordinances in particular, are adapted to be wonderfully conformable to the temper and ways of the world; and withal, that the apostles set out in their ministry like a pack of Jesuit Missionaries, resolved at any rate to accommodate themselves to the humours of the different nations with whom they should have to do; — In the *East*, in conformity to the peculiar notions there entertained of the power of the master of a family, they would, when such an one believed, baptize along with him, and on account of his faith, *all his adult children, servants and slaves*; while in the

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West, or, at least, in these northern nations of Europe, where no such high notions are entertained of the authority of masters, they would take quite a different method, and exclude from baptism all the adults in a believer's house, that did not, like him, make a personal profession of faith and repentance. — According to the doctors scheme, the *practical uniformity* of christianity, is a mere chimera; for so far from being meant to be *practically uniform*, it is adapted to be in that view the most *multiform religion* under the Sun: not excepting even the camelion system of the sons of Loyola.

You draw very different inferences from the *silence* of scripture, at least in some cases, from what I do. — Because infant baptism is *not* mentioned in the New Testament you think it may be safely practised; seeing that had not our Lord meant to allow that custom, he would have mentioned it by way of *prohibition*: which you seem to think absolutely necessary, because infants were entitled to circumcision under the law: But you should consider that the law has been abolished by Christ, and is no longer our rule. — From the abolition of circumcision and the passover you infer that some rites must be substituted in their room under the gospel; but there is no more reason to expect substitutes for those two rites than for the other legal rites. — You might as well insist that we ought to have substitutes too for the Jewish Festivals and High Priest, and so plead for the Pope's supremacy, and the religious observance of Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, as well as for infant baptism.

The positive duties of the New Testament (of which baptism is one) take their rise, *not* from Old Testament rites,

rites, but from the express command of Jesus Christ; so that in performing these duties, the Old Testament customs can be no rule to Christians: The command of Christ, or the directions of the New Testament, must be here our sole rule. The law of baptism is of a *limited* nature, and mentions *only* the professors of faith and repentance, as the proper subjects of that ordinance—Its *silence* about all others, amounts to a full prohibition of their admittance to baptism, agreeable to the nature of all limited laws. My plea then, Sir, is this, that the law of baptism being totally silent about infants, is equivalent to an express prohibition to baptize them: an express prohibition, therefore, would have been here quite redundant and useless—such a prohibition in the law of circumcision, in regard to the females, would not have been more so.

Here I beg leave to observe, that according to your hypothesis, the right of the *females* in Abrahams family to some external sign, or some sort of circumcision, might be as well argued and as easily made out, from the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant, as the right of believers infants now to baptism. Take the following as a specimen—“God promised Abraham, to be a God to him, and HIS SEED after him; (Gen. xvii. 7.) Of this promise and covenant circumcision was the token: (ver. 10, 11.) But surely the Almighty did not confine his promise and covenant to the *male*-seed of Abraham. The distinction of *sex* only, cannot make so vast a difference, that the *sons* of the patriarch were within the covenant, and his daughters out of it. Besides, this covenant with Abraham was the covenant of *grace*; that very covenant which contains the spiritual and eternal blessings of the Gospel. Far be it

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from any one to think that the *daughters* of *Abraham* were excluded such a covenant. Being then within the covenant, they have a right to an external sign and token of the covenant.—True, it is only said in *express* words, *every MAN-CHILD among you shall be circumcised*. But certainly, *Abraham* and the *Israelites* were not such poor reasoners, that they could not infer by *analogy* the right of the *female*. *Abraham's daughters* must not be cast out of covenant: but to deny them an external sign would be an exclusion of them, and leaving them to the *uncovenanted* mercies of *God*.

As to the *origin of infant baptism*, I can by no means allow that the date of it may be fixed farther back than the former part of the *third century*. *Cyprian* is the very first you can produce as an advocate for it. The writings of *Origen*, especially the translations of *Ruffinus* and *Jerome*, are not, as I before shewed, to be admitted as evidence of his sentiments upon this subject. There is no knowing what passages are his, in those books ascribed to him, which you cite in support of your favorite practice. In addition to what I urged before on this head, let it be here observed, 'That *Origen* himself in one of his Epistles, complains that his works were *adulterated* as it were before his own eyes. They did not spare him, it seems, whilst he was *alive*; no wonder *Ruffinus* [and *Jerome*] gave him no quarter when he was *dead*; arbitrarily changing, adding, and castrating the father without mercy.' (See *The New Testament, Greek and English*, published in the year 1729. vol. 2. Notes, p. 933.)—These considerations, together with what I advanced in the latter part of the *fourth letter*, will sufficiently invalidate

lidate, with all impartial people, those pretended testimonies of *Origen* which you have brought forward in support of infant baptism.

As to *Tertullian*, you cannot pretend to say that he was one of the patrons of infant baptism: He is indeed the very first who mentions that practice; but he mentions it with *disapprobation*. Nor does he mention it as actually in use at that time, as I before observed, but rather, as a point that was had in speculation, or was beginning then to be agitated. His testimony, therefore, of whatever use it may be to *me*, can be of none at all to *you*.—*He flourished about the beginning of the third Century, in Africa, where infant baptism made its first appearance.*

Justin and *Irenæus* are the only fathers besides, whose testimonies now demand my consideration.—Your plea that the latter favoured infant baptism rests upon the *presumption* that by *regenerated* he meant *baptized*. To support that presumption, you urge, that *Justin* calls baptism *regeneration*.—Now supposing for arguments sake, that *Justin* by *regeneration*, really meant baptism (which if he did, must certainly have been in an improper and corrupt sense) yet that will not prove that *Irenæus*, though he lived after him, meant so. If *Justin* used the word improperly and corruptly, it does not follow that *Irenæus* did so too. At any rate it must be *uncertain*, and therefore *unproved*, that *Irenæus* by *regenerated* meant *baptized*: consequently the passage referred to, does not amount to a proof that he held infant baptism.

The *first* of the passages you quote from *Justin*, refers only, as you yourself own, to *adult-baptism*, and therefore can be no proof that *Justin* was a *pedobaptist*.—As to his sense of the word *regeneration*, it is not quite

quite clear that he meant by it *baptism*. It appears to me that he distinguishes between the *baptism* of the converts he speaks of, and their *regeneration*; and mentions the former as an argument for the latter. To suppose him to mean by both the *same thing*, would be supposing him proving *idem per idem* (— they are baptised, for they are baptised) and so making his reasoning to be downright absurdity and nonsense: whereas, his meaning in truth seems to be, that those converts when brought to the water, having made a profession of faith, were deemed and declared regenerated, as was evident from their being admitted to baptism.

As to the words of *εκ παιδων ερασιτευθοντων το Χριστων*, in your other quotation from Justin, I still think they may be justly rendered, *who were instructed in Christ from their childhood*. — *Instructed*, not *disciplined*; the latter by no means agreeing, as Dr. Gill observes, with Justin's use of the word; whereas the former perfectly agrees with it. (In proof of which he refers to the *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 258 and 272.) *Instructed FROM their childhood*; not *disciplined IN their childhood, or infancy* as *pædobaptists* plead — a sense which is manifestly *absurd*, as I shewed before, p. 105. Whereas, *instructed FROM THEIR CHILDHOOD, in Christ*, is quite intelligible and rational, and doubtless answers to 2 Tim. iii. 15. as I observed in my last tract. You attempt to ridicule what I said there, as if I had affirmed that the two passages are of a similar *sound*. I only meant that they are of a similar *signification*; and particularly that the *εκ παιδων* of *Justin*, and the *απο βρεφων* of *Paul* are so.

I am, &c.
LETTER

* As to the words of *Plutarch*, concerning *Antippon* the son of *Sophilus*, which Mr. C. renders, *having been disciplined to his father*, I leave him to

LETTER VII.

of your very best age, finding it difficult to determine
as to whether it is right to baptize a child under a year old,
but now, Sir, I am told, you will not be in doubt.

SIR,

NOTWITHSTANDING the very confident manner in which the right of the seed of believers to baptism is daily asserted, it is absolutely impossible to prove it to be a doctrine that is according to godliness, or a principle worthy of the Lawgiver of ^(a) the Christian Church. This right, you allow, in process of time *expires*; but you cannot tell the *day*, the *week*, the *month*, or even the *year* of the child's age, in which that expiration takes place. What then, is to be done when a parent happens to believe during the intermediate space, or dubious period of the child's life? Would you baptize the child then, or not? If you baptize it you are acting without a warrant: And if you do *not*, there is a probability that you deprive it of its right, and, according to your own principles, even of a most important privilege. Which of these courses, Sir, would you take? Whichever it is you would prefer, you must be content to go in the *dark*. Your law of baptism then, cannot surely be the production of a good and wise lawgiver (otherwise it would doubtless furnish you with instruction in such a case as this) much less can it be the production of

Q

Jesus

to enjoy his own sense; for (to use the words of Dr. Gill to Mr. Brekell) 'I don't understand it; and should have thought that *μαθητευτας δε τω πατρι* might have been rendered more intelligibly, as well as more truly, *instructed by his father*; since, as it follows, his father was an Orator.'

^(a) see p - 107 of *seq*: -

Jesus Christ, the best and wisest of all lawgivers.—

It is far more like the contrivance of an Egyptian task-master.—To require, without fail, to baptize the seed of believers under a certain age, and yet not to tell you what that age is, must be altogether as unreasonable as the terms imposed in Egypt upon the oppressed Israelites. Here again, according to that well known and equitable rule, ‘Render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar’s,’ I find myself constrained to render unto Antichrist the law of infant baptism, as his undoubted right and property.

You infer the right of believers infants to baptism, from its being said (Acts ii. 39.) *The promise is unto you and to your Children*, and (1 Cor. vii. 14.) *Now are they (the children of a believing parent) holy*. But those passages, if admitted here, would prove too much: — They would even prove a right to baptism when the child is grown up, as well as in the earliest period of its life. The original word there rendered *children* evidently means the *offspring* in general, and is by no means to be limited to those of one week or one year old. *Tekya*, (says Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*) is a general word, which in scripture and other writers is used to set forth all sorts of children, of what sex, of what age, of what degree soever they be. *Tekyon*, the word here used (says the judicious Mr. Barker, upon the latter of those passages) is not confined to young children, but means a person’s child of whatever age; *tekya τοις Αρραμ* means all the Jews, *tekya τοις Θεοις* those who serve God, *tekya τοις πολεων* the inhabitants of a city.’ In short, Sir, the above passages are just as much to your purpose as the first verse of the book of Esther.

Of the *households* said to be baptized, you say (Rem. p. 70.) that you ‘still think it perfectly right to demand

of me a *clear* and *unequivocal* proof, that *there was not one infant, no, not one little child in such households?* Would you give up the argument if I were to produce such a proof? I really cannot think you would. The plainest proofs from me hitherto, have stood for nothing with you. To what purpose then should I give you such a proof in this case? But why do you not give a *clear* and *unequivocal* proof that *there were infants, or that there was so much as one little child in those households?* — That indeed would be doing something. But the truth is, you *cannot* bring such a proof; that is, you *cannot* prove the *affirmative*, which yet is *your* proper work; and therefore to keep yourself in countenance, and draw off the readers attention from your very humiliating situation, you forsooth, call upon *me*, in a most manly tone, to come forward, and at my peril, *prove the NEGATIVE!* Now, Sir, it is certain that the inspired writers do not mention infants as a part of those households that were baptized. — Is not that a sufficient proof that there were no infants there? — especially when it is remembered how careful they were to mention infants upon other, and even far less important occasions, when they were really parties concerned? — At least, this is a proof, and even, a *clear* and *unequivocal* proof, that they, yea and that the **HOLY GHOST** did not mean we should believe that there were any infants, no, not so much as one little child, in those households: And this is quite sufficient for my purpose.

The reflections you were pleased to cast upon *Mr. M'Lean*, in your reply to what I had advanced upon this subject in my last tract, induced me to send that gentleman one of your books, that he might, if he thought proper, vindicate his conduct, which, otherwise, I should consider as my own duty. —

Conse-

Consequently, my worthy friend wrote me the following letter, with full permission to lay it before you and the public.

“ *DEAR SIR,*

IN Mr. Carter’s *Remarks* on your *Observations on Infant sprinkling* I find very little argument. Others, however, may perhaps be of a different opinion; and hence it may be proper to say something by way of reply. Neither my time at present, nor the bounds of a single sheet, will permit me to enter fully into the subject; and there is the less occasion as you inform me that you intend to publish. His

Letter I. is taken up with his own vindication. I hope you will do him all manner of justice. In

Letter II. He still contends that the words *bapto* and *baptizo* signify any mode of *washing*, particularly *sprinkling* and *pouring*, but he has not produced one passage where they must necessarily be so understood. Neither Mark vii. 4. nor Luke xi. 38 mention what he calls *unbaptized hands*. There is no such expression in all the scripture that I know; and tho’ there were, it would not favour either *sprinkling* or *pouring*, for hands are not ordinarily washed in such ways. He surely knows that *Nipto* is the word for *washing hands*, Mark vii. 2. 3. and that the *baptism*, ver. 4. is such as was performed on cups, brazen vessels, tables or beds, which is expressed Lev. xi. 32. by *putting them into water*. Tho’ the Jews held things unclean which really were not so, yet they are not blamed for using a different mode of cleansing from that prescribed in the

the law for things ceremonially polluted. The *divers baptisms* mentioned Heb. ix. 10. must signify the divers bathings prescribed both to priests and unclean persons, on different occasions; because the apostle distinguishes *sprinkling* from these baptisms by another word ver. 13. And the law distinguishes dipping, sprinkling and pouring as three different actions Lev. iv. 6. 7.—If the law does not command one man to take another and plunge him under water, must it follow that Christ does not command one man thus to baptize another? —I know not where he finds the scripture using the (derivative) word *baptizo*, “when only part of the body was washed.” If you do, pray dash out this, and conceal my ignorance. The primitive *bapto* is indeed used to express the *dipping* (not the *washing*) of a finger Luke xvi. 24. and an hand Mat. xxvi. 23. but these may be as effectually dipped as the whole body. In

Letter III. He insists that the *promise* Acts ii. 38. 39. is the promise made to Abraham, because the Apostle mentions that promise on another occasion Chap. iii. 19. 25. (strange logic indeed!) —And because the promise of Abraham includes the promise of the spirit Gal. iii. 19—25. as if that was the only promise of the spirit which Peter could refer to in Acts ii! Yet Peter speaks not a word of the promise made to Abraham in the whole of that discourse, but cites at large the promise of the spirit from Joel —Shews its begun accomplishment in what was then seen or heard, and applies it to the Jews nearly in the very words of that Prophet —comp. ver. 39. with Joel ii. 32.—By the *children* he understands *infants*; but neither the promise to Abraham nor that in Joel speak of infants. “They which are of *faith*, the same are the children of Abraham.” Gal. iii. 7. “They which be of *faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham,” ver. 9.

And

And they "receive the promise of the spirit *thro' faith*," or believing, ver. 14. In Joel there is no mention made of any children but the *sons and daughters* who should *prophesy* upon receiving the extraordinary gifts of the spirit; and *these are evidently the CHILDREN the Apostle speaks of*.—By "all that are afar off" he understands *Gentiles*. But whether Peter by that expression intends *Gentiles* (which, from many considerations, is not very likely) or only *dispersed Jews*, it makes all one as to the argument, since he restricts the promise to those only *whom the Lord shall call*; and none can appear to us the *called* of the Lord, but such as comply with his call, to faith and repentance. He says

Letter IV. "The Apostle's words (1 Cor. vii. 14.) plainly imply, that in consequence of one of the parents professing the christian faith, their children are holy; whereas if both were unbelieving their children would be unclean." But his words imply no such thing. The Apostle says nothing of the lawful children of two unbelieving parents, nor does he give the least hint that such are unclean. Neither does he make the holiness of the children a *consequence* of one of the parents professing the christian faith; but of the unbelieving parent being *sanctified*. "The unbelieving wife (says he) is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now" (since the unbelieving party is *sanctified*) "are they holy." Now, what kind of holiness is it, that thus depends upon the holiness of an unbeliever? "Not an holiness of nature (says Mr. Carter)—but an *holiness in themselves*, i. e. an *holiness of state* derived to them from the believing parent's covenant, or that new covenant in which the believing parent is interested; and therefore *a further holiness* than that of the unbelieving parent." But where does the apostle thus distinguish the holiness of the children from that of the un-

unbelieving parent? If the childrens holiness is derived from the believing parents covenant, the holiness of the unbeliever must be more immediately so; because it is the *medium* thro' which the holiness of the children is derived, and *without which* they would be unclean, —‘*else were your children unclean*;’ and therefore the childrens holiness cannot be a *further holiness* than that of the unbelieving parent thro' which it comes, but must of necessity be of the very same kind; for new covenant holiness can never depend in any sense upon the sanctification of an unbeliever; nor does it depend upon the sanctification of the believing parent himself, or even upon the legitimacy of the natural birth. The bastard children of unbelievers may have new covenant holiness, and the legitimate children of believers want it. I do not say that the holiness of the children is *originally* derived from the holiness of the unbelieving parent. The holiness of both is *originally* derived from the ordinance of God, making the one a lawful wife to the believer, and *consequently* the other a lawful issue, which was not the case under that law whereby Old Israel were separated from the nations. This is the only sense which suits the apostles argument, and the scruples of the believing Corinthians. Mr. Carter’s account of the childrens holiness agrees neither with the holiness of the Old nor New Covenant, but is only *a piece of corrupted Judaism*. I must not stay, however, to examine it. He says ‘The state of the unbelieving parent neither is nor can be declared holy;’ yet the apostle *declares* that the unbelieving wife (*μιαστη*) is *made holy*; must she not therefore be holy? and what more is declared of the children? Goodwin’s remark upon the use of *αγια* instead of *καθαρα* is mere trifling.

Letter V. begins with the argument from Mark x. 13, 14. Where I find nothing worth noticing except the

the following quotation. — ‘By such we must understand little ones properly so called.’ Granted — ‘but not all such, since the persons who brought these infants or little ones to Christ, were without doubt his followers; or such as had an high veneration for him — they were Jews, not heathens,’ &c. All this may be very true for any thing I know; but where do we learn that (ταῦτα τοισιν) of such, has any the least reference (τοῖς προσερχοῦσιν) to those who brought them? The words are not, of the children of such as brought them; but of such (ταῖς, little children) is the kingdom of God; i. e. the kingdom of God includes such young subjects as these. Here is no distinguishing of children by the character of their parents. Nor does this passage afford the least warrant for baptizing them, but the contrary. They were not brought to be baptized. Jesus himself did not baptize them, for he baptized none, John iv. 2. Nor did he command his disciples to do it; nor would they have forbidden infants to have been brought unto him had they been used to baptize such — The kingdom of God here evidently means his *invisible* kingdom, for it is such as none can enter, but those who receive it as little children, ver. 15. or are *converted* and become as little children, Mat. xviii. 3. Whereas many enter his *visible* kingdom who are not really converted, Mat. xxv. 1—13. Yet to this last only does baptism belong; for this good reason, because it is not administered by Christ himself who knows whom he hath chosen, but by fallible men, who can judge only by the outward appearance.

It is of little consequence whether we grant baptism to have come in place of circumcision or not, provided we keep clear the distinction between the *children of the flesh* and the *children of the promise*, which runs thro’ the whole New Testament, and is particularly stated

stated Rom. ix. and Gal. iii and iv. This distinction cuts down at once all the arguments from circumcision. With this scripture distinction in our eye, we may freely admit, that as circumcision belonged to all the *fleshy seed* of Abraham under the old covenant, who were known to be such by their natural birth; so does baptism belong to all the *spiritual seed* of Abraham under the New Covenant, when they appear to be such by the confession of their faith in Christ. Mr. Carter endeavours to confound this distinction: “Where (says he) does the Holy Ghost apply the term *carnal seed* to the infants of believers? Is not *carnal* used always to denote the character of adults who live according to the desire of the flesh and of the mind? This distinction therefore, the carnal and spiritual seed of Christians is totally without foundation.” p. 48, 51.

— The term *carnal* is frequently applied to *things* as well as persons; see Rom. xv. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. vii. 16 and ix. 10. When applied to adults, it generally marks something bad in their character or conduct, but not *always* to that extent he mentions; for it is applied to christians, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3, 4. But the expression he excepts to is *carnal seed*; and where does he find this used to denote the character of adults in distinction from that of infants? Were there none of *believing* Abraham's children a carnal seed in their *infancy*? How then were they “the *children of the flesh*,” Rom. ix. 8. “born after the flesh” Gal. iv. 23? But he has mistaken us altogether; for we do not divide the infant offspring of Christians into their *carnal* and *spiritual seed*. We affirm that *as the seed* of Christians, they are *all carnal* because in this respect Christians are only *the fathers of their flesh*, or *carnal part*, in distinction from God *the father of spirits*, Heb. xii. 9. “That which is

born of the flesh is flesh," or, carnal, let it spring of whom it may, Joh. iii. 6. Further, we affirm, that the infants of Christians are in their first birth "Shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," Psal. 51. 5. and are "by nature the children of wrath even as others," Eph. ii. 3. The *first state* even of the children of God is carnal, and this commences with their very existence, and continues till they are changed. In both these senses they may very properly be called their *carnal seed*. But it is quite improper to call the *believing* children of Christians their *spiritual seed*; for as *believers*, they are the children of God, Gal. iii. 26 — the seed of Abraham, ver. 29. — the children of Jerusalem which is from above, the free woman, Chap. iv. 26, 31. And, in this respect, not the *children*, but *brethren* of their believing parents. — Indeed, if the parents are instrumental in begetting them to the faith, they may in that sense be called their *children*, as Timothy was Paul's *son*, 1 Tim. i. 2. And the Galatians his *little children*, Gal. iv. 19. But this relation is not peculiar to parent and child, nor can it take place in mere infancy; besides, the children may sometimes be instrumental in converting their parents.

Letter VI. Contains some testimonies from the ancients; but as he "cannot feel himself in the least moved by the authority of such ancients to believe that *immersion* was the practice of the Apostles of Christ who enjoined the churches to do all things decently." p. 17. he cannot with any good grace urge their authority upon us for *Infant Sprinkling* contrary to the commission and uniform practice of the Apostles, supposing there were any such authority to produce before the latter end of the second century, which I believe there is not. I shall therefore proceed to

Letter

Letter VII. Wherein he handles the Argument from the baptism of whole houses. In reply to the quotations from my pamphlet, he charges me with "begging the question, or taking for granted the point in debate." p. 72. and with grossly misrepresenting, and treating with injustice Messrs Glas and Huddleston." p. 74. 81.

In answer to the first charge I shall state the question, and see which of us has begged it. The question or point in debate, if I mistake not, is this, Whether there were any infants baptized in these houses? I denied there were — 1. Because in all the accounts of these houses, there is not a word said of infants or of their baptism; for this I referred to the passages themselves. — 2. Because it is affirmed of all that were baptized in these houses, that they *believed, rejoiced, &c.* This also I rested upon the Authority of these accounts, which was the best I could produce. I know nothing, therefore, which I have *taken for granted*, except it be this, that Infants *cannot* be said to *believe, rejoice, &c.* And for this I shall only appeal to common sense. — It might reasonably be expected that the Pædobaptists, however firmly persuaded of their favourite point upon other grounds, would candidly give up these houses as unserviceable to their cause; but instead of this they, with much confidence, beg one question after another in every step of the argument. — 1. They beg leave to assert that there were infants in these houses; and — 2. They beg also to be excused from proving it, thinking they have sufficiently acquitted themselves when they put it upon us to *prove the negative*. Should we tell them there are many houses *without infants*, and that therefore their assertion is at best but *uncertain* — Should we come a little closer to the point, and re-

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mind them, that the scripture informs us *all* in these houses *heard the word and believed*, which infants were not capable of, and that therefore their assertion is evidently *false*; they will then—3. Beg to have it granted, that it was only the parent, not the house, that believed and rejoiced; or, if that will not do, that the word **ALL** signifies only the adult *part* of a house, and that the other part consisted of infants. Should we, for arguments sake, grant them the unscriptural supposition, that there were infants in these houses, they have still—4. To beg the question as to their baptism. How so? Is it not said expressly, that **ALL** in these houses were baptized? True; but they have already begged that the word **ALL** might signify only a **PART**, i. e. the *adult part* of a house, therefore it can conclude for the baptism of none else; so that to make out the baptism of these *imaginary* infants, they are obliged to reverse their former petition, and to beg they may be comprehended in the word **ALL**, from which they before excluded them. In short, when *all* in a house are said to *believe*, they are obliged to restrict it to adults; but when *all* in the *same passage*, and in the *very same house*, are said to be *baptized*, they extend it to infants: Why? because they *take it for granted* there were infants in these houses, and that they were proper subjects of baptism, which is the *very point in debate*. I am afraid there is something worse than *begging the question* in this manner of arguing. It looks too like *handling the word of God deceitfully*. Mr. Carter's question, (p. 72) must be answered by him and his friends—we have nothing to do with it. I shall put it with a very little variation, and let him answer it if he can: “By what rules of just and fair interpretation can” the Pædo-baptists “prove that the same mode of expression which” they

they explain in one sense, when used of a house believing and rejoicing, "must be understood in a different point of view, when applied" to the same house baptized? If in the former" case "it can be referred only to" adults, "why, in the latter, must it be stretched any farther?" *comp. p. 125.*

With respect to his other charge viz. That I grossly misrepresent, and treat with injustice Glas and Huddleston I need say very little in reply to it, since he has, by publishing their own words more fully, sufficiently vindicated me from that charge. I have represented Mr. Huddleston as maintaining—that none in Cornelius's house feared God but himself—that the account of Cornelius hearing, believing, and receiving the Holy Ghost, is not true—and that he treats it as a falsehood, that Paul and Silas spake the word of the Lord to any in the jayler's house besides himself. I have also represented Mr. Glas as denying, that any in the jayler's house rejoiced and believed in God but himself; and as making the jaylers rejoicing to be not (as we read it) *in God*, but *in the whole house*. These are the expressions in my pamphlet which Mr. Carter finds fault with; and how far they support his charge of gross misrepresentation and injustice let the following contrast determine.

SCRIPTURE.

THE Sacred historian tells us, that Cornelius was "A devout man, and one that feared God ($\sigma \nu \nu \pi \alpha \nu \iota \iota \tau \omega \nu \iota \nu \omega \alpha \nu \iota \kappa$) with all his house." *Acts. 10. 2.*

Messrs. GLAS & HUDDLESTON.

This is not a sufficient foundation for us to be assured that any of these *all* prayed to God, gave alms, &c. As did Cornelius himself---It is said that he *feared God with all his house*, which may without any violence done to the words, signify his maintaining the fear of God in his house in his prayers and good works---It cannot be affirmed in the fear of God, he had any house else but little Children. *Hudd. Lett. p. 22. 54.*

Of

Of the same house of Cornelius, together with some of his kinsmen it is written, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," ver 44. And Peter says, God "purified their hearts by faith." Chap. 15. 9.

Of the jayler and his house it is also written, that Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord (καὶ παρεῖπον τοῖς εὐθοίς εὐαγγελίῳ) and to all that were in his house." Acts 16. 32.

We are further told that the jayler (πραξιασάον παύοντι πεπιστευκός τῷ Θεῷ) "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" ver. 34.

I find no hint of the house of Cornelius bearing, believing, or receiving the Holy Ghost, *Ibid.* p. 54.

Try if it can fairly appear to you from any thing said in the whole narration, that Paul and Silas had any other hearer from the jayler's house besides himself. *Ibid.* p. 56.

It is said ver. 34. that he believed; and there is no mention of any other believing but himself. The text says, that he believed God, rejoicing in the whole house---This joy was his who fell down before Paul and Silas. It was he that rejoiced believing in God. Glas's works, vol. 2. p. 129.

When Mr. Carter has fairly reconciled the above columns, I shall freely take with his charge of gross misrepresentation; but if the Scripture account of all the house in the first column be really contradicted by Glas and Huddleston in the last; and if Mr. Carter cannot make it appear that I have put any other sense on their words than what agrees with the whole drift of their reasoning, then I expect, from his professed regard to justice, that he will acknowledge his charge groundless. It is indeed of little moment to me whether he do so or not, but it may be of some consequence to himself. — But then it seems I have said, that "they treat the scripture narration as a falsehood." I neither said nor meant to say, that they avowedly deny the veracity of the sacred historian; but I said, and still maintain, that

that they flatly *contradict*, or *deny* what, in the above instances, the inspired historian *plainly* and *expressly affirms*; and this I call *treating it as a falsehood*; for how else do men *treat falsehood*? It will not exculpate them from this charge to say, “they understood the sacred historian’s words in a different light;” for the scripture may be as effectually treated as a falsehood by *contradicting its true sense*, as by *denying its authority*. The Jews admitted the divine authority of the Old Testament scriptures, professed the highest veneration for them as the word of God, and also believed that they testified of the Messiah; yet by denying the *true sense* of that testimony, and its application to Jesus, they *made God a liar*. 1 Joh. 5. 10. Will Mr. Carter call this a *gross misrepresentation*? or can he say any thing in vindication of his brethren, that may not with equal justice be pled for the Jews? did not *they understand* the words of Moses and the prophets *in a different light from that in which Christ and his Apostles viewed them*? and did they not *give their reasons for taking them in that sense*? yet the *true reason* was “they loved darkness rather than light,” Joh. 3. 19. And this must, in some degree, be still the reason why men now, as well as then, pervert the scriptures, and argue against their plain sense. They may, like many of the Jews, be very serious in their opposition to the obvious sense of Scripture; but some darling lust, or favourite point, is the real cause of such opposition.—I noticed that Mr. Glas makes the joyler’s rejoicing to be not in God, but *in the whole house*; and in what other sense could I understand his translation of the text? He affirms, “The text says that he believing God, *rejoiced in the whole house*.” If this rendering is just it can never appear from the text that his rejoicing was in God, for the words refer it immediately to the *whole house*:

house. Where then is the gross misrepresentation complained of in this particular? I have elsewhere proved that Mr. Glas's criticism on this passage is false, and that our translators have rightly rendered *travoua*, *with all his house*; and all that Mr. Carter offers in reply is, that he "does not think Mr. Glas's criticism in the least enervated by any thing there offered against it." But he ought not to have passed it over in this slight manner. The meaning of the text depends on the sense of that word, and therefore he should give some reason why he adopts Mr. Glas's criticism in opposition to our translation, or else fairly give it up as a perversion of the sense.

I am

Dear Sir,

Yours with all due respect,

ARCHIBALD MC LEAN.

Edinburgh, March 27. 1783.

Having now, Sir, laid before you Mr. M^c Lean's *defence* (which I cannot but consider as a sufficient exculpation of that part of his conduct which you thought fit to arraign in your last tract) I shall conclude this letter with just observing, that the words you quote (p. 32.) from Eph. vi. 1. and Col. iii. 20. only shew, that there were some *young people*, or *children* (NOT *infants*) along with their parents, among the members of the antient churches of Ephesus and Colosse—which does not in the least contradict my principles.

I am, Sir, yours &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

EXTRAVAGANCES and ABSURDITIES are some of the principal ingredients in the composition of the doctrine of infant baptism. Some of the latter have been pointed out already, page 105; to which many more might be easily added: and as a specimen of the former I beg leave to lay before you the following quotations.—**Mr. JOHN WESLEY** affirms (Preservative, p. 160.) that, “If infants are guilty of original sin in the ordinary way, they **CANNOT** be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism.”—**Mr. WHITEFIELD**, on John iii. 5. (Works, vol. iv. p. 355. 356.) asks and answers in the following manner, “Does not this verse urge the *absolute necessity* of water baptism? **YES**, where it may be had; but how God will deal with persons unbaptized we cannot tell.”—**MR. MATTHEW HENRY** in different parts of his *Treatise on Baptism* lately published, and now so much cried up, talks at the following rate: “Such are the privileges which attend the ordinance [of baptism] that if our Master had bid us do some great thing, would we not have done it, rather than come short of them? much more when he only saith unto us, *wash and be clean; wash and be CHRISTIANS.*—Baptism *wrefts the keys of the heart* out of the hands of the strong man armed, that the possession may be surrendered to him whose right it is.—The water of baptism is **DESIGNED** for our *cleansing from the spots and defilements of the flesh.*—In baptism our names are *engraved upon the breast-plate*

plate of this great High Priest. — This then is the efficacy of baptism ; it is *putting the child's name into the gospel grant*—We are baptized into Christ's death ; i. e. God doth in that ordinance, *seal, confirm, and make over to us, ALL the benefits of the death of Christ*. — **INFANT BAPTISM** speaks an HEREDITARY relation to God, that comes to us by DECENT.* — These writers, Sir, are the oracles of a very great part of the devout Pædobaptists of this kingdom. Nothing is more common than for their disciples and admirers to allege, that the *Baptists*, forsooth, lay *too great stress* upon the ordinance of baptism ! Had they found in the writings on our side of the question but the tenth part of the extravagance to be found in those of their own darling doctors, there might have been some reason in such an allegation : Still, however, the charge would come with very ill grace from them — That *Wesley* and *Whitefield* should talk in the above strain is not to me very marvellous. When they talk extravagantly they talk in character ; and talk what is sure of being taken in good part, and deemed edifying by their followers : But that *Henry* should be capable of setting such an example in that line, as even they could scarcely venture to imitate, must surely be in no small degree surprizing : Nor can it, I apprehend, be sufficiently accounted for upon any other principle than that of the fascinating and befooling tendency of a riveted attachment to an antichristian invention. It is rather unfortunate for the memory of Mr. *Henry* that his *Treatise on baptism*, like too many posthumous publications, had the hard fate of falling into the hands of an *Editor* whose zeal far exceeds his discretion.

Notwithstanding

* See *Booth's Pædobaptism Examined* p. 230. 231. 232. — This very judicious publication, which I sincerely recommend to the candid perusal of all serious Pædobaptists, came not into my hands till after the foregoing sheets were printed off. Month : Rev: Vol: LXXI,

Notwithstanding all that you have said to the contrary, I am still of opinion that Peter by ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF (Acts ii. 39.) did not mean the Gentiles:—1. Because you and your children and all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, evidently answers to Mount Zion and Jerusalem, and the REMNANT whom the Lord shall call, in Joel, ii. 32. And both most obviously intend The Jews residing in Judea, and those dispersed abroad, or settled afar off among the Gentiles. The prophets, indeed, frequently foretold the calling of the Gentiles; but Joel could not properly call them a REMNANT, any more than the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem: Whereas the dispersed Jews might with great propriety be distinguished by that term.—2. The practice of the Apostles and primitive ministers, plainly shews that it was the Jews scattered abroad, that Peter meant by those afar off; for some of them presently went to preach to those Jews: but it does not appear that they would ever have gone to the Gentiles, if they had not received a clear and unexpected direction from heaven for that purpose.—3. When the first Gentile converts received the Holy Ghost, the Jewish believers present were astonished: (Acts x. 45.) which clearly indicates that they had not known or thought before, that the promise of the spirit belonged to the Gentiles.—4. That those afar off, in Eph. ii. 17. means the gentiles, is no proof that it means them in Acts ii. 39. any more than that all flesh means all mankind in Jer. xlvi. 5. and in Ezek. xxi. 4. because it does so in Numb. xvi. 22. and xxvii. 16. or, as you most curiously argue, (Rem. p. 22. 24.) That Peter in Acts. ii. 39. refers to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, because he refers to it in chap. iii. 25. and in Gal. iii. 13. 14. 5. It is true, as was intimated, that antient prophecy pointed out the Gentiles as well as the Jews, as interested

terested in the privileges of the Gospel—And so also did our Lord's Commission ; but it was sometime before the Apostles thoroughly understood either, or viewed them in that latitude. The Spirit, indeed, was given to lead them into all truth ; but it was gradually, and *not all at once* that He did so.—That the Apostles *knew* of the calling of the gentiles, but did not know *when* they should be called, or that *they* should be instrumental in their calling, is a most pitiful quibble, which would never have been thought of, but for the sake of helping ‘at a dead lift.’

In asserting (obs. p. 73.) ‘That the disciples did not apprehend, when they first partook of the Lord's Supper, that Christ should suffer and die.’ I did not mean, as you most strangely insinuate (Rem. p. 87.) That our Lord had *not foretold* them of his sufferings and death, but that they did not comprehend his predictions, and therefore had no expectation of those events.—The *consternation* into which the sufferings and death of Christ threw his disciples, proves that what I then said was right. In corroboration of the same, see Mat. xvi. 21. 22. Mark ix. 10, 31, 32. Luke ix. 44. 45. and xviii. 31—34. John xx. 9. The passages of scripture which you mention on this occasion do not in the least contradict my assertion—Nor had I left them unconsidered till you were pleased to point them out.—The remarks, from those passages to the end of the paragraph, I will not dispute: you shall enjoy the credit of them undisturbed by me:

When I happened to mention the circumstance relating to *Dr. Watts*, at the close of my last tract, I did not expect that it would have given you any alarm; nor had I the least idea of laying any stress upon it; well knowing that it is the Authority of the New Testament, and not that of *Dr. Watts*, or of any other uninspired person, that must determine the controversy

controversy between us.—The substance of that circumstance was published several years ago, by *Mr. MEDLEY of Liverpool*, during the dispute between him and *Mr. DE COURCY of Shrewsbury*; and it has been published since by *Mr. TURNER of Abingdon*, in his *Remarks upon LAKE's Sermon on infant baptism*. But as neither of these Gentlemen have mentioned *Dr. GIBBONS*, it may be incumbent on me, as the affair now stands, to assign my reason for introducing his name:—I had, Sir, been credibly informed that *Dr. Watts* had signified to him his *disapprobation* of infant baptism; and I did not know who else he had signified that to.—The truth is, *Dr. GIBBONS* himself, some years ago, told *Dr. STENNETT*, that *Dr. Watts* wished to give up the baptism of *infants*, not only, as he had *not* observed any benefit arising from the administration of the ordinance to *them* (as *Dr. Gibbons* now *owns*, and which is sufficient to justify what I had asserted) but even, as he could not but *deem* it an *unscriptural and pernicious practice*. With more to the same purpose. Whether or not *Dr. Watts* relapsed afterwards into his former principles (as *Dr. G.* will have it) I cannot take upon me to say; nor do I, indeed, care any thing at all about it. You must, however, give me leave to tell you, that the story about *a written defence of his upon baptism*, which he gave his friend a few months before his death, falls very far short of proving the *affirmative*; since that same *defence* is *not* said to have been *WRITTEN a few months before his death*, or, *AFTER he had declared himself for the opposite sentiments*: It might, for aught that appears to the contrary, have been written full *fifty-years before*. In short, Sir, *Dr. Gibbons's Letter* is but a *shuffling performance*—But he is one of *Dr. Watts's London Orthodox Independent brethren*—of whom, I confess, I could never think very highly.

highly, since I read a certain account of their conduct towards the Doctor, in the MONTHLY REVIEW, for March, 1782. Art. 2. p. 170. 171.—What is there said, sufficiently accounts to me for the steps which your worthy London Correspondent has taken in this business.

Here it may be proper for me to observe, in answer to what you have remarked, page 92. That I am not conscious of having quoted any one of my Authors unfairly. My sole object is *truth*: the regard I have for that, and for the public, will not suffer me to descend to so unbecoming a conduct.*—With reference to those words in my title-page, *Buy the Truth*, you in a most triumphant tone exclaim, “Should not He, who has placed this just and wise precept in the front of his pamphlet, have been careful to have sold *nothing else*!” What, SELL TRUTH! And, SELL NOTHING BUT TRUTH!—I really did not expect that you would have publicly avowed this principle, tho’ you have often in the course of this controversy, seemed as if you held it. Your inviolable attachment to infant sprinkling seems now sufficiently accounted for: Nor can it be expected that you will ever give up that practice while it is your firm opinion that *nothing but TRUTH is to be sold*.—The SALE of Truth, after all, is what I can by no means approve of; because, among other weighty reasons, another precept in the front of my pamphlet, and which immediately follows that which you took notice of, expressly forbids it.—SELL IT NOT.

Judging it high time now to take my leave of you and of this controversy, I conclude, and remain,
Sir, Your sincere friend and servant,

Lynn, July 1. 1784.

W. R.

* As to the words in the *Observations*, at the beginning of Letter iii, censured in the Monthly Review for last May, they were not quoted from the Dunciad, nor quoted un-fairly.—They were found exactly as they are there set down.—The Reviewer, nevertheless is sincerely thanked for his remark—as well as for his strictures in the same Review under article 47.

Month: Rec: Vol: LXX, p. 394—399.

